

# URBAN GRACE CHURCH PROFILE

Tacoma, WA



**URBAN**  
**GRACE**  
THE DOWNTOWN CHURCH



## MISSION

Urban Grace is an ecumenical congregation that is multicultural, diverse, and welcoming to all. We welcome the full participation of all people—any denominational background, race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic location. We hope to be the open table that Jesus set for all God’s children and offer a nurturing fellowship where it’s safe to wrestle and explore, acknowledging the simultaneous joy and pain, blessing and loss, of this life. We’re grateful to lean into the truth that we are perfectly imperfect and still loved, chosen and accepted.



## WEBSITE



[URBANGRACE.ORG](http://URBANGRACE.ORG)



## LOCATION

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TACOMA, WA 98402



## CONTACT US

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# URBAN GRACE: THE DOWNTOWN CHURCH



## A BRIEF HISTORY

Urban Grace (2005) traces its lineage through First Baptist Church (1883) which was founded in New Tacoma six years before Washington became a state.

In 2005, a group of religious and community leaders gathered at First Baptist's invitation to discuss what Tacoma needed in a downtown church. The answer was an ecumenical progressive church focused on arts and social services for people of every kind of belief and identity and as a continued presence in downtown Tacoma.

Urban Grace was born: Ecumenical, interdenominational, open to people from all Christian traditions. Urban Grace takes an arms wide open approach even further-- we welcome anyone--no matter background, race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender identity, or socioeconomic status.

In the last 19 years, Urban Grace grew from 20 to over 100 people in worship. Its first two pastors were from the Presbyterian tradition and the ecumenical experiment turned out to be an icon of openness and embrace to all in our community. We have visitors every Sunday and new members join us throughout the year.

## OUR CHURCH LIFE

Urban Grace is a progressive ecumenical church located on the traditional lands of the Puyallup Tribe in the heart of downtown Tacoma, Washington. We acknowledge we are on the homeland of the Puyallup tribe and have gratitude towards the Puyallup people who lived on and stewarded these lands and still do. We are committed to uplifting their voices, experiences, and history.



We are a church that cares deeply about social justice and those who society has marginalized. We believe God is revealed through creative expression, so we work with arts organizations as a church congregation and in the use of our historic building throughout the week. Most importantly, we are a church where everyone is welcome regardless of their church background, race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, abilities or disabilities, no matter exactly what one believes, all are welcome to participate in the full life of the church.

# URBAN GRACE: THE DOWNTOWN CHURCH



## OUR CHURCH LIFE

Our mission and commitment are reflected in the use of our 40,000 square feet historical building which functions as a community center for social service organizations, Christian ministries and arts organizations. As a result of our 2017 Capital Campaign, substantial upgrades and renovations were completed throughout the building. The 850-seat theatre, a dance studio, the city's largest free community meal, and numerous organizations use our building every week. We are honored to continue the faithful legacy of First Baptist Church.

Our Sunday and Livestream attendance average between 80 and 100 people. We currently employ a Transitional Pastor, Associate Pastor of Children's and Youth Ministry and Director of Operations who work more than 30 hours per week and five part-time supporting staff.



# MISSION, VISION AND VALUES



## OUR MISSION

To develop and be a church in downtown Tacoma that serves the city and its people by proclaiming God's love, grace, and justice revealed in Jesus Christ.

## OUR VISION

We envision ourselves as a church that ...

- Welcomes all – reflecting a multicultural and diverse congregation.
- Worships together in varied, diverse, and relevant expressions, drawing on the rich history and traditions of the Christian church.
- Develops, nurtures, and uses the arts and artists as a means of exploring and expressing our faith.
- Gathers for theological reflection, spiritual practice, ministry training, and leadership development within the city.
- Supports, collaborates, and develops efforts to seek justice and equity for all who live in our city.
- Serves the spiritual and social needs of downtown residents.



## OUR VALUES

Our Values

- An Ecumenical Congregation
- Multicultural Perspectives
- Reflection, Dialogue and Doubt
- The Arts
- Social Justice
- Our Poor and Marginalized Neighbors in Downtown Tacoma
- Wide Range of Spiritual Journey

# WHO WE ARE



## WHO WE ARE

Urban Grace is an ecumenical congregation that is multicultural, diverse, and welcoming to all. We welcome the full participation of all people—any denominational background, race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic location. We hope to be the open table that Jesus set for all God’s children and offer a nurturing fellowship where it’s safe to wrestle and explore while acknowledging the simultaneous joy and pain, and blessing and loss of this life. We are grateful to lean into the truth that we are perfectly imperfect and still loved, chosen and accepted. We want to provide our community with a faith home where we can build diverse and deep relationships and experience shared spiritual practices such as worship services, studies, small groups, and prayer, in order to gain greater connection to God and each other. We are teachers, businesspeople, nonprofit employees, medical care providers, stay at home care-givers, unemployed, seeking to bring the love, grace, and truth of Jesus to our gritty city.

**Total Members:** 292

**Active Membership:** 111 (most active members attend Sunday services 2-3 times/month)

**Average Sunday attendance:**

- 71 adults, 16 children under 12 years
- approximately 20% BIPOC, 20% LGBTQIA+
- 30% age 65+, 60% ages 35-64, and 10% under 35
- 55% families with children, 30% new since Covid

**Denomination:** Ecumenical, Interdenominational. We are historically affiliated with American Baptist Churches USA and the Presbyterian Church USA.

**Facility:** Built in 1925, 40,000 square feet, 4 story, sanctuary seats 850, chapel seats 80. Extensive restoration completed in 2017.

**Leadership:**

- Leadership Council (Nine members, focusing on vision, program and ministry)
- Board of Trustees (Six members, focusing on operations, administration, finance, and facility)

**Current Community Partnerships:**

World Relief, L’Arche, The 253 Conversation, Tacoma Pride Festival, Marginalized Refugee Empowerment Program: Africa (MAREPA), several like-minded local churches, and additional community and church partnerships through our Community Breakfast Program.

# WHO WE ARE



## WORSHIP

At Urban Grace we value time spent together on Sunday mornings and hope it is meaningful for all who attend. As an ecumenical congregation we follow the liturgical calendar and use the lectionary which roots us in ancient Christian tradition and connects us to the larger body of Christ. We hope these rhythms and seasons deepen our spiritual practices as we remember together God's promises and the story of our reconciliation to God and one another.

We generally write our own liturgies to add our own flavor through poetry, dance, art, music and reflection time. Our worship is varied, diverse, relevant, and draws on the rich history, music, and traditions of the Christian church while contextualizing it for a multicultural and changing culture.



# YOUTH & CHILDREN MINISTRY PROGRAM



## BLESSING OF THE CHILDREN AND SUNDAY SCHOOL

We care about our children's voices and thoughts. Before the children head to Sunday School, they come to the front of the sanctuary for "Blessing of the Children." The topics range from the Bible passage focused in church that day, a precursor to what they will learn about in their classrooms or something relevant happening in the world. During the service we offer nursery care and two Sunday School classes, PreK-Kindergarten and first to fifth grade, which includes a Bible lesson, craft, and activities.

## TEEN JOINT YOUTH GROUP

In partnership with Manitou Park Presbyterian Church, First United Methodist Church of Tacoma, Immanuel Presbyterian Church, Bethany Presbyterian Church, and First Christian Church of Tacoma we create a fun and safe space for all students in Grades 6 - 12, regardless of where they are on their faith journey, gender identity, or sexual orientation. We meet monthly, rotating meeting locations among the churches, including a two-night youth retreat every year. All students in Tacoma and the surrounding areas are welcome to join us; having an affiliation with a church or a Christian background is not required.



## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Every summer we co-sponsor Vacation Bible School for Kindergarten to fifth grade with Bethany Presbyterian Church. Our curriculum is based on loving our neighbor and caring for the world. Children learn Bible stories, participate in science lessons, singing, crafts, and recreation.

# CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES



## COFFEE HOUR

Following every worship service coffee and snacks are provided in the parlor.

## MONTHLY LUNCH

On communion Sundays we meet at a restaurant/pub for food and fellowship.

## COMMUNITY GROUPS

Seven community groups comprised of 68 adults and 47 children/youth meet throughout the city. Each group decides how they want to spend time together. Some share meals and fellowship while others are study-focused.

## ANNUAL CHURCH RETREAT

The church retreat provides opportunity to build community over meals, recreation, campfires, and worship. Retreat topics are based on needs of the congregation.

## JOINT WORSHIP IN THE PARK

Each August we join with Manitou Park Presbyterian Church for worship, communion, and a potluck at Manitou Park.



## BOOK STUDIES AND TOPICAL DISCUSSION GROUPS

The congregation is invited into focused discussion and study of various topics. Past books studies have included: *Jesus and John Wayne*, by Kristin Kobes Du Mez, *So you want to Talk About Race*, by Ijeoma Olulo, *Jesus and the Disinherited*, by Howard Thurman, *Grace Can Lead Us Home*, by Kevin Nye and *The Enneagram*, by Andreas Ebert and Richard Rohr.

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH



## BREAKFAST

Our primary mission project is the Community Breakfast every Sunday morning. Working with other community groups and churches, we currently serve over 300 meals to our neighbors in need. Our commercial kitchen was fully renovated in 2017 and equipped with brand new appliances, including a walk-in freezer.

On communion Sundays we meet at a restaurant/pub for food and fellowship.



## TACOMA PRIDE

We celebrate Tacoma Pride participating in the local street festival with a booth and frequently organized activities for Tacoma youth while their guardians attend pride festivities. We also co-host an interfaith *Service of Lament* during Pride week.

## THE URBAN GRACE TACOMA PODCAST

Podcast conversations are conducted monthly with a member from our congregation regarding their experience with social justice or how they serve people in the community.



## HOLIDAY ARTISANS MARKET



The market brings together global fair-trade products with local artisans for a festive marketplace on the first weekend in December. The market features quality products with a social justice, community-based focus, since 2008. People from the congregation and community look forward to this annual event for unique shopping and local connections.

## SPECIAL PROJECTS

Throughout the year, we engage in various Food, Clothing, even Book Drives to support our downtown neighbors.

# STEWARDSHIP



Thanks to a capital campaign conducted in 2017 our building has been improved. The sanctuary has new seats and fresh paint; our lower temple (where we have the community breakfast) is clean, with new floors, paint, and lighting; our commercial kitchen has been fully renovated and equipped with brand new appliances, including a walk-in freezer. Gender neutral restrooms reflect inclusivity of all individuals regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation.



Our tenants are congruent with our values. Proceeds from the rents sustain our budget. Current Tenants include Leadership Foundations, Monarch Music, Music Lab, Narcotics Anonymous, Pregnancy Aid, Tacoma Capoeira Martial Arts, Tacoma Farmers' Market, Legally BLACK, Pacific Northwest Dance Foundation, Blue Heron Tai Chi, as well as individual therapists and artists.

# SHARED LEADERSHIP



Our faith is best when it shows up in relationships. We are examining our pastoral leadership structure to implement a shared leadership model. Our full-time staff oversee the well-being of our congregation, programs, plans, and relationships with lay leadership. Our lay leaders are assuming more responsibility in reviewing our vision, volunteering in diverse areas of the ministry, partnering with the staff in planning and programming, and providing performance evaluations.



We seek a pastor who is excited to be a part of a ministerial team and excited to further this vision of shared ministry.

# LEGACY OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH



First Baptist built a church on Pacific Avenue in 1884, grew quickly and expanded the structure in 1892. For the first, but not the last time, the congregation debated whether or not to move out of downtown to the growing residential outskirts of the city. They decided to stay and remain a part of central Tacoma. In 1925, the church moved into a new building on the corner of 9th and Market streets which serves as the home of Urban Grace to this day.

In the 1920s and '30s, First Baptist had more than 2,000 members, a bustling community of faith that filled the sanctuary on Sundays and contributed to life at the center of its port city on The Salish Sea.

From its inception, the new church was designed to take part in civic life. It was intended to serve not just the large congregation, but the entire community. This mission of outreach was also present in other ways: A brief history on the Urban Grace website notes that First Baptist lent "support to Japanese immigrants, service members during wartime, senior citizens, and the city's homeless." Urban Grace is committed to stewarding this legacy. First Baptist closed in 2005 and bequeathed its building to Urban Grace, the Downtown Church.

## GEOGRAPHIC AREA

Urban Grace is located in fast growing Tacoma, WA, the heart of Pierce County, approximately 30 miles south of Seattle and north of Olympia. Sea-Tac airport is located 26 miles from our church. We are at the Southern portion of the Salish Sea. Mount Rainier forms a majestic backdrop to the viewscape.



## CULTURE

Tacoma is a vibrant city, with many restaurants, antique shops, theaters and waterfront. There are several hospitals in the community and many schools and universities. We also have several museums, such as the Museum of Glass, the Tacoma Art Museum, and the Washington State History Museum. Point Defiance Park is the second (to Central Park, NYC) largest urban park in the country and houses an aquarium and a zoo.



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Words of feeling from the congregation during this search process:



# OUR NEXT PASTOR



## JOB DESCRIPTION AND QUALIFICATIONS

<b>POSITION:</b>	PASTOR
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	PASTORAL
<b>REPORTS TO:</b>	CHURCH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL
<b>TYPE OF POSITION:</b>	FULL-TIME, EXEMPT
<b>TOTAL COMPENSATION:</b>	\$80,000-\$90,000
<b>ISSUE OR REVISED DATE:</b>	4/1/24

## BASIC SUMMARY

The Pastor will be a spiritual leader and communicator of the Urban Grace mission and values to staff, congregation, and community at large. He/She/They (They) will nurture and foster spiritual formation, administer the sacraments, and provide pastoral care and counseling as well as coordinate Sunday morning worship services.

# OUR NEXT PASTOR



## ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS

### **Worship & Preaching**

- Coordinate Sunday morning worship services with the staff; executing the vision, content, and direction for worship at Urban Grace.
- Provide leadership during worship services, including preaching and administering the sacraments.
- Facilitate creative worship expressions and ideas.

### **Pastoral Care, Spiritual Development and Mentoring**

- Reengage congregational life as we emerge from transition
- Create a spirit of awareness and awakening for theological development within the congregation.
- Cultivate an environment of belonging and connection
- Coordinate the engagement of children, youth, and teens with the Associate Pastor of Children's and Youth Ministry to foster diverse connections within our multi-generational faith community.
- Provide pastoral care and counseling to individuals and the congregation.
- Provide premarital counseling, perform weddings and funerals for both the congregation and the larger community, as requested

### **Other Responsibilities or Duties**

- Participate in setting the agenda and moderating the Church Leadership Council and Board of Trustees meetings.
- Share leadership and facilitation of congregational meetings and leadership retreats.
- Participate in setting the agenda and leading staff meetings.
- Co-supervise primary church staff.

### **Community Outreach and Partnerships**

- Continue to strengthen strategic relationships, partnerships, and connections with other community organizations, churches, and individuals that serve the Urban Grace mission and ministry.

# OUR NEXT PASTOR



## PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Seminary educated (M.Div. or equivalent) and ordination in a recognized denomination
- Experience in pastoral leadership in a progressive urban context
- Theologically aligned with Urban Grace values
- Energy and enthusiasm for the challenging work of leading a church
- Experience with Team Ministry
- Exhibits high cultural and social awareness with a commitment to anti-racism, equity and diversity, and full inclusion
- Experience in working with staff and lay leaders, in a collaborative manner
- Comfortable working in both in-person and virtual contexts

## WORK ENVIRONMENT

- General office working conditions, the noise level in the work environment is usually quiet.
- The Urban Grace facility is a large four-story building without an elevator. Church offices are on the 2nd floor.
- Worship services are livestreamed on Facebook and various meetings are held both in person and by Zoom.
- Proficiency in basic computer skills needed including word processing, email, electronic presentation and file management skills (e.g. Google Drive, Microsoft Office suite, Canva, etc.).

## HOW TO APPLY

*Women, Persons of Color, and LGBTQIA+ persons are encouraged to apply.* Send your application consisting of cover letter, resume and link to a sermon or homily to [pastorsearch@urbangracetacoma.org](mailto:pastorsearch@urbangracetacoma.org).