



CHURCH PROFILE

The people who call Grace home come from diverse backgrounds and serve the community in a variety of ways. Our desire is to make disciples of Jesus Christ in everyday life. Grace Foothills has been described as a welcoming place for people from various denominational backgrounds to grow spiritually, heal from previous “church burn-out” or “church-inflicted hurts”, and flourish in a community of believers that is Gospel-driven rather than programmatically-driven.

Grace Foothills Mission is to be an authentic Christian Community, captivated by Jesus, sent to proclaim His grace to the Polk County area and the world.

Jesus Christ is our Focus.

We believe that our calling is to know Jesus and make him known. The Gospel means "good news." It is an announcement of victory - victory over sin and death by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We love the good news - we love Jesus. He is the Gospel. He is our focus.

We are Real People.

We believe that Jesus came for all people. The church is not a club for the religious elite. It is a place for broken people to be honest about their need and open about their failure. Grace Foothills is a place for real people.

We Gather to Worship.

We believe that all of life is worship - work, play, service, and rest. We also believe that God calls his people to gather together to worship him as a whole family. Our Sunday Morning Gatherings include a time of singing, prayer, and biblical teaching. The atmosphere is relaxed and the focus is Jesus.

We are Made for Community.

In the beginning, God said, "It is not good for man to be alone." This is far more than an encouragement toward marriage. It is a call to relationship - to community. God has called us to live and work together. At Grace, we currently live this out through “Grace Groups” and our Youth Ministry.

Our Location & Surrounding Communities:

The physical location of Grace Foothills is in Tryon, NC, in the scenic Foothills of the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains. It is nicknamed “The Friendliest Town in the South” for good reason. This unique small town has welcomed individuals and families from all across the US (and beyond) with open arms. The town has been infused with the best of the cultures, experiences and talents of its residents.

The church meets in the historic Tryon Theater for Sunday worship. A long-standing relationship with the theater’s owners has enabled Grace Foothills to create a unique, relaxed “community church” feeling that is welcoming to all.

Grace Foothills also has a Ministry Center located in a storefront just a few doors down from the theater. In this space, the church is able to have events, meetings, and classes. It is the location of the

Children's Ministry and Nursery on Sunday mornings. The upstairs space, called "The Loft", is well-utilized by the Youth Ministry as well as the occasional game night! Both the downstairs Ministry Center and the Loft are available for members of the community to use.

Surrounding Communities -

While the church is located in Tryon, members travel from all of the surrounding communities to attend. Grace Foothills is made up of folks from Tryon, Columbus, Saluda, Lake Lure, Green Creek, Mill Spring (Polk and Rutherford counties) in NC as well as Landrum and Campobello (northern Spartanburg county) in SC, and everywhere in-between (the Foothills).

Nearby larger cities of Asheville (45 min), Hendersonville (25 min), Greenville (45 min), and Spartanburg (30 min) with all amenities are just a short drive away!

For more information about Tryon, check out this story by NC Weekend:

<https://video.pbsnc.org/video/weekend-tryon-ne4dvv/>

Area Demographics -

The communities described above are a blend of small-town charm and rural atmosphere. Working farms dot the country-side creating a bustling Agri-tourism economy, while art galleries, boutiques and restaurants draw folks to the downtown areas. Horses also play a large role in the area's culture. World-class equestrian activities and stables are part of the DNA of the Foothills.

Population of Polk County mid-2021 was just under 20,000 – 31% being over age 65, ages 19-64 at 47% and 16% being age 18 and under. Caucasian individuals make up the majority of Polk County's population, with African American, Latino, and other ethnicities making up a smaller portion. In terms of K-12 academics, Polk County public schools are highly rated as some of the best in the state of North Carolina; district offices are located in Columbus (more info here - <https://www.niche.com/k12/d/polk-county-schools-nc/>). Economic demographics are generally all over the spectrum, with many wealthy individuals residing in the Tryon/Polk County area, a number of families who live in poverty conditions, as well as those in between. Future outlook is that there is much economic and population growth potential in the Polk County area and communities of Landrum and Campobello, SC.

Our History:

Grace Foothills began in 2006 when the leadership of Grace Community Church (PCA), located in south Asheville, sent one of their elders down the mountain each Sunday night to lead a Bible study. This group was composed of GCC members living in the Polk County area and neighboring towns, who desired to plant a local church to serve their communities.

Rev. Scott Stewart was hired by Grace Foothills to pastor this new congregation in Polk County in May 2007; the church continued to hold regular worship in the home of core members. March 2008 saw official public worship services begin in the church's current home of the Tryon Theater. And in 2012, Grace Foothills became a particular church in the Presbyterian Church in America.

During the summer of 2014, Rev. Scott Stewart was called away to lead a new church plant in TN. The following April (2015), Rev. Josh Kwasny became pastor of Grace Foothills and served until April 2016. In May 2017, Rev. Steve Morgan became pastor of Grace Foothills and ministered until early February 2022.

Current Situation and Future Aspirations:

Much like churches across the nation, Grace Foothills faced the challenges of Covid shut-downs by moving to online worship and Zoom small groups. In June 2020, when local guidelines loosened and churches were able to meet in person again, Grace began to meet for worship in our storefront meeting space - this allowed for two services with limited seating. Continued closure of movie theaters restricted the use of the Tryon Theater until June 2021. Prior to that opening, the deep desire for members to reconnect to the church community led to several families searching out churches where full congregations were meeting more regularly.

While Grace Foothills has fewer individuals and families than it once did, those who remain are committed to this church where real people seek to deepen their relationships with Jesus and with one another.

CURRENT SITUATION	FUTURE ASPIRATIONS
<i>Membership & Attendance</i>	
<p>Grace currently averages 75 “seats filled” (adults, youth & children) at Sunday morning worship services, down from roughly 140 seats filled pre-Covid. This number encompasses both members and “regular attenders”. While attendance is down 50%, giving has only dipped by 25%.</p>	<p>GFH is situated in an area that is poised for exponential population growth. The “urban flight” happening in larger cities combined with the lower cost of living and the beautiful natural environment of this area has created an even greater infusion of new people to the area. Grace’s unique setting is welcoming to those seeking a church family but who are uncomfortable with traditional settings. Grace Foothills welcomes the opportunity to grow as the Spirit leads.</p>
<i>Spiritual Growth & Christian Education</i>	
<p>Expository preaching during the Sunday morning worship service is the primary mode of education currently. The youth group is quite active and engages in regular gatherings with a planned curriculum. The newly restored Children’s Ministry currently uses the Gospel Story Bible curriculum and accompanying at-home companion book.</p>	<p>Continued emphasis on expository preaching during Sunday worship services, as well as children’s ministry and regular youth gatherings. Increase adult Christian education opportunities, utilizing the men’s and women’s groups that already meet together.</p>
<i>Internal Community</i>	
<p>Several Grace Groups (i.e. small groups) are functioning in some capacity. Events for women, men and for the whole congregation happen occasionally. These are typically “organic” in nature and planned by church members.</p>	<p><i>Internal Community</i> Whether through revitalized Grace Groups, church-wide gatherings or working together in service opportunities, the members desire to grow in relationship with one another. A shared vision that encourages these connections and opportunities would be helpful in fostering a sense of togetherness.</p>

External Community

Grace Foothills actively participates in a variety of local community events - especially those in the downtown Tryon area. The church also supports a small number of missionaries who serve in a variety of capacities in the U.S. and abroad.

Grace Foothills aspires to continue to find ways of serving our local community and to expand its mission outreach in both scope and strategic focus.

Leadership/Staff:

We believe that God has designed his church to be led by biblical qualified elders.

As a group, the elders are responsible as shepherds for the congregation. They provide oversight, pastoral care, and biblical counsel - in order to equip the Church for ministry. At this time, Grace has four Ruling Elders.

Church staff members are instrumental in the ministries and administration of Grace Foothills.

Currently, Grace has one full-time Worship & Youth Ministry Coordinator and a (very) part-time Church Administrator.

Top Ministry Priorities and Expectations

- **Teach & Preach:** provide gospel-centered exposition of Scripture in weekly preaching and other teaching, proclaiming both truth and grace with real-life application.
- **Disciple:** facilitate gospel-centered teaching and discipleship, empowering believers to grow and exercise their gifts. Facilitate leadership development for elders, staff, and lay leaders.
- **Lead:** in partnership with the elders, provide vision and leadership by planning, delegating, and seeing things through to completion and/or sustained implementation.
- **Build Community:** foster and actively facilitate a thriving culture of gospel-centered, prayerful, and outward-oriented community within the church. Provide pastoral care.
- **Fellow Pilgrim:** live in humble reliance on God's grace and daily provision, deny self, pray, exhort and encourage, and persevere with a hopeful eye set on God's coming Kingdom.



Theological Requirements and Considerations

- Doctrinally Reformed while also sensitive to the believers from other denominational backgrounds and perspectives. Understands GFH's application of the Regulative Principle.
- Ordained as a PCA Teaching Elder or a transferable ordination from a like-minded denomination
- Committed to sanctification being rooted in gospel belief

Character/Ministry Values

- Endeavors to embody both boldness and meekness in pastoral duties
- Passionate for missional living and community engagement compelled by the gospel
- Shepherding heart, compassionate and ministers out of personal repentance and faith
- Networks with the broader body of Christ
- Committed to small groups for accountability and outreach
- Teachable, a team player, and committed to the plurality of elders
- With elders, prays for the church; and regularly visits the sick, the elderly and any unable to join regular fellowship

Other Requirements

- Strong work ethic, planning and organization skills to complete weekly ministry duties
- Demonstrated ability to supervise the day-to-day duties of staff and church ministries, and lead effectively through a small staff supported by volunteers
- Understands unique fabric of church and local community and open to small town ministry
- Strong preference for candidates with previous experience as a pastor
- Long-term commitment to the church

Accountability: Will be accountable to the elders of GFH and to the Highlands Presbytery (WNC), both personally and professionally.