

September 23, 2014

Dear Grace Church Family and Friends,

I have probably said this to you before, but one of the best parts of my job is greeting people after worship. Whether it is in the narthex (church lobby) or at coffee hour, those ever-so-brief connections bring me great joy. I love chatting with all of you, giving the kids a high-five and introducing myself to visitors.

Recently, I have been struck by the number of newcomers joining us for worship. While almost all churches are declining in terms of attendance and membership, and many churches are actually closing, Grace Church is growing and thriving.

Most of these newcomers are visiting Grace because you invite them to come. The other day I emailed a family who had just spent their first Sunday with us, and in reply, they said, "Our friends told us to try Grace. They said we would like it." Thanks to all of you for extending these kinds of invitations.

Growth like we have been experiencing, though, does bring some challenges. The parking lot fills up. The church gets crowded. It is hard to remember people's names, much less get to know them.

Our Membership Committee is working on these challenges, focusing not just on welcoming newcomers but also on how to connect them with other Grace parishioners. If you would like to be part of the Membership Committee, please let me know.

The most important thing all of us can do is introduce ourselves to people we do not know. Our church is our home, and we want everyone to feel welcome, as if they just walked into our living room. During worship, we can introduce ourselves to those around us during the exchange of the peace, and coffee hour is another great time to meet new people.

Developing relationships, building community, making Grace Church the church we want it to be, is up to all of us.

See you on Sunday,
Andrew