



Grace Presbyterian Church  
Fort Wayne, Indiana  
Mission Study  
July, 2016

Mission Statement:

***Following Jesus, Serving Others***

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## Introduction of Grace Presbyterian Church

Grace Presbyterian Church (PC), nestled within the residential neighborhood of North Highlands, is located on the northwest side of Fort Wayne, IN. Grace was established on March 5, 2000, following the merger of two long-standing Fort Wayne Presbyterian churches, North Highlands and Westminster.

- North Highlands PC was chartered on May 20, 1956, as a mission extension of Bethany PC.
- Westminster PC originally started as Second Presbyterian Church in 1844. Second PC changed its name to Westminster PC in 1894.

As of December 31, 2015, our current membership stands at 134.

As Presbyterians, we are committed to Christian discipleship in the Reformed tradition. We value our core Presbyterian heritage in such aspects as equality of women in leadership, the practice of open communion, and an open government in which everyone has a voice. As a congregation, we are always aware of our mission, "Following Jesus, Serving Others." We follow Jesus through: Christian education classes, Bible study groups, meaningful experiences in scripture-centered worship services, music, and involvement of members in all aspects of church life. We serve others with our dollars and with our hands, by reaching out to our immediate neighbors, to several ministries in the Fort Wayne community, and to our international partners.

Our members are confident that God is in our hearts and we have worked to create a church welcoming to all ages and needs. In 2013 we updated our nursery to allow separate care for infants/toddlers and preschool/elementary students. In 2015 Grace completed a major accessibility renovation, allowing access to all levels of the church by members and guests.

Grace is a financially stable, debt-free church. Our finance committee successfully developed a campaign to fund the accessibility renovation mentioned above. A loan was taken out to help fund the project, and it was paid in full in three years instead of the projected 20 years.

We are a congregation of many multigenerational families as well as newer members and visitors. Our members come from different religious backgrounds and have found a welcoming home at Grace. We are a church in which people can move quickly, from the outer circle of sitting in the pews, to the inner circle of leadership and active participation. We are open to new ideas, new ways of doing things, and the development of new leaders.

We enjoy an active relationship with the churches in our zip code and participate in joint worship services throughout the year. In addition, we rent our space to Fort Wayne Church of Christ for their worship and weekday evening gathering.

## What is God calling us to be/do?

Our church has always been a group of Christian believers who listen for the voice of the Spirit and attempt to follow where God is leading us. Our mission statement is a simple phrase, "Following Jesus, Serving Others." We follow Jesus in three important areas. In worship, we listen as a body of believers. In small groups, we hear Christ's word in meaningful experiences which include fellowship, Bible study, committees, and prayer. In interactions with our neighbors, we want to discover and meet spiritual and physical needs.

We serve others by working to make our building accessible to all. We aspire to be gifted welcomers and maintain contact with visitors and members. We identify, support, and serve mission partners outside of our walls. We make every effort to communicate clearly with the congregation and our neighbors. We place a special importance on Christian education for all.

In response to a church-wide study termed the "Graceful Transformation" in 2007, in addition to more recent purposeful planning, we have focused on the following objectives:

1. We continue to recognize the importance of ***giving to others***. Our mission budget constitutes ten percent of our overall annual budget. In addition to our financial giving, we support our mission partners through prayer and the gift of volunteering time. Each Christmas, we support a family through the Salvation Army. Our dedication to giving to others is a unique and integral part of who we are. Our current mission partners/funds are:
  - Presbytery of Whitewater Valley Unified Mission
  - Greater Fort Wayne Campus Ministry – [ipfw.edu>ministry](http://ipfw.edu>ministry)
  - Wellspring Interfaith Social Services – [wellspringinterfaith.org](http://wellspringinterfaith.org)
  - Associated Churches of Fort Wayne and Allen County – [associatedchurches.org](http://associatedchurches.org)
  - Fort Wayne Habitat for Humanity – [fortwaynehabitat.org](http://fortwaynehabitat.org)
  - Grace Presbyterian Church Mission Trips (mainly to El Salvador)
  - Pastor Mission Fund (allocated to the Pastor's choice)
2. We continue to encourage ***small group experiences*** that allow members and friends to feel a part of a caring circle of members who are connected through activities and interests. We offer different Sunday school classes, Bible study groups, social gatherings, exercise groups, etc. Children and youth (ages preschool through high school), adult classes, and various women's and men's groups meet at different times throughout the week. This past fall, we held a church-wide book study organized into small groups that fostered conversation, fellowship, and Bible study.

3. We have succeeded in our organized effort to renovate our building to allow **accessibility for all people, regardless of physical challenges**. Following a very successful capital campaign, we have installed an elevator, bathroom facilities on every level, and ramps that make our church welcoming to all who enter. Several pews have been removed in different areas in our sanctuary to allow room for walkers and wheelchairs. A recent upgrade to our sound system was completed to help people to hear with increased clarity. Several members have been trained to monitor the sound board during services to make adjustments as needed. Currently, energy-efficient lighting is being installed for improved visibility.
4. The members of Grace have focused on how we can **reach out to our neighbors** and meet the needs of the community. We have hosted annual events for the neighborhood including "Back to School with Grace," a safe neighborhood Halloween party, and an Easter Egg Hunt activity where the resurrection story is conveyed to area youth. An after-school study program was begun and held for six years before it was discontinued. Grace has been a charter partner of a local Boy Scout Troop since 1953 and a Cub Scout Pack since 1988. Our church provides a meeting space for the North Highland Neighborhood Association. In addition to sending volunteers on Habitat for Humanity Mission Trips to El Salvador, we also participate in local builds here in Fort Wayne. We continue to look for new ways to reach out to our neighbors.
5. **Communicating** who we are and what we are called to do has also been a focus. Our website has been updated, we have a detailed newsletter, and we have a Facebook page all geared toward keeping our members informed of what is happening. In addition, recent visitors to our church have reported finding us through these communications.
6. **Caring Circles** have recently been updated. All members, including those who are home-centered, are included in different groups. These groups are cared for by one deacon and one elder each. This organization allows for people to be contacted if they have not been present recently to see if something is needed. Birthday and anniversary cards, etc. are sent to each member. Communion is provided to those who are unable to attend church.

## **A Snapshot of Grace's Finances**

Grace is a debt-free church. Our Finance team and committee chairs work hard to keep the expenditures under control. We make every effort to pass a balanced budget every year.

In addition to pledges, our other means of income are as follows:

- Donations
- Rent from Fort Wayne Church of Christ
- Interest
- Dividends
- Fund-raising projects – Scrip and Kroger rewards are two ongoing projects in which we participate

Recent pledge fulfillment rates are as follows:

- 2013 – 98%
- 2014 – 94%
- 2015 – 90%

In 2015 we had 62 pledge units and this year we have 56 pledging units (out of a possible 92 family units).

Due to the diligence of our Finance team, membership, and Session, the 20-year loan we took out for the Accessibility Project was paid off in three years.

**What some of our members have to say when asked,  
“What do you like about attending our church?”**

“I like that the Sunday school teachers always have a lesson to teach. They are all ready for questions about the lesson. They are never mean and they always have a smile on their faces. Also, everyone in the worship service is always kind to one another and they enjoy worshiping God. Pastor Ann always has good Bible phrases to focus on and good songs to sing. The announcer towards the end of the service catches us up on upcoming events. They also tell us some jokes that cheer us up and make us laugh.”

Alex, age 11

“Grace Presbyterian Church feels like an extension of my own family. We celebrate together, we grieve together. We share in communion together. We strive to grow in faith together.”

Tyler, age 24

“I feel like going to Grace Presbyterian Church is like going home.”

Pamela, age 37

“Approximately ten years ago, I happened to drive by Grace Presbyterian Church. There was a cozy, welcoming feeling emanating from the church. I had the feeling that the church was a very welcoming church. I wasn’t wrong! There is a friendliness and willingness to accept anyone who attends, regardless of age, economic status, education, and all those other factors that are often off-putting. My spirituality has been developing in such a loving environment.”

Tammy, age...60 something

“When we first started the tradition of standing up and ‘passing the peace,’ I wasn’t sure that I liked it. It seemed a little intrusive to me. Now, it’s one of my favorite parts of Sunday service. It’s a time when I get to greet so many people whom I care about and with whom I worship.”

Will, age 90

## Fort Wayne: One of the “Top Ten Best Affordable Places to Live” - 2015



Low living expenses, including below-average housing, transportation and grocery costs, were more than enough to get us interested in Fort Wayne, IN. But what solidified their spot on our list of the Best Affordable Places to Live was the city’s vast array of entertainment options and the high quality of life residents enjoy. Fort Wayne’s recreational amenities, arts and cultural offerings, housing options, and vibrant downtown add up to one of the best values in the country.

The typical Fort Wayne resident spends just 24 percent of their monthly income on housing costs, which is 4 percent under what most mortgage experts suggest. The median home value is \$99,900, while the median household income surpasses \$41,000.

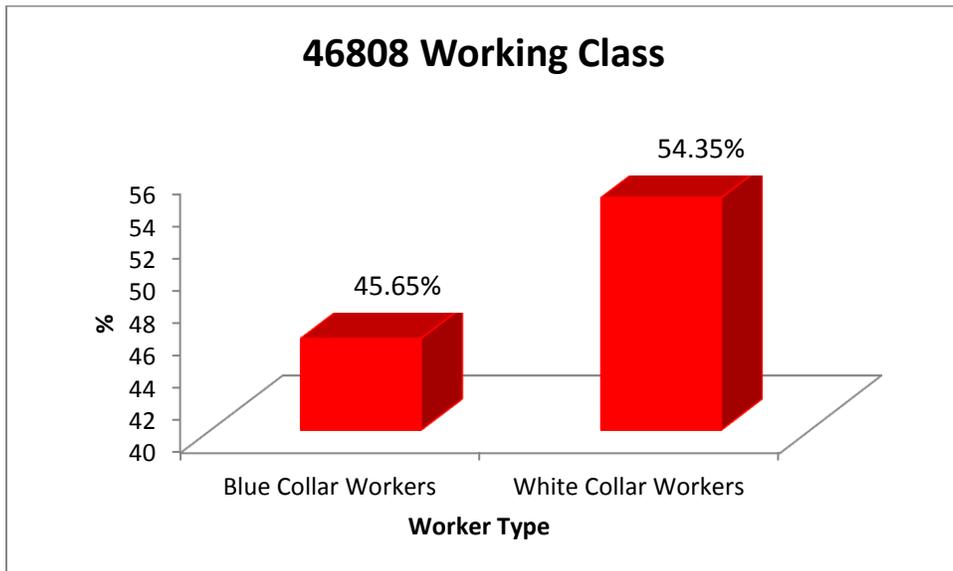
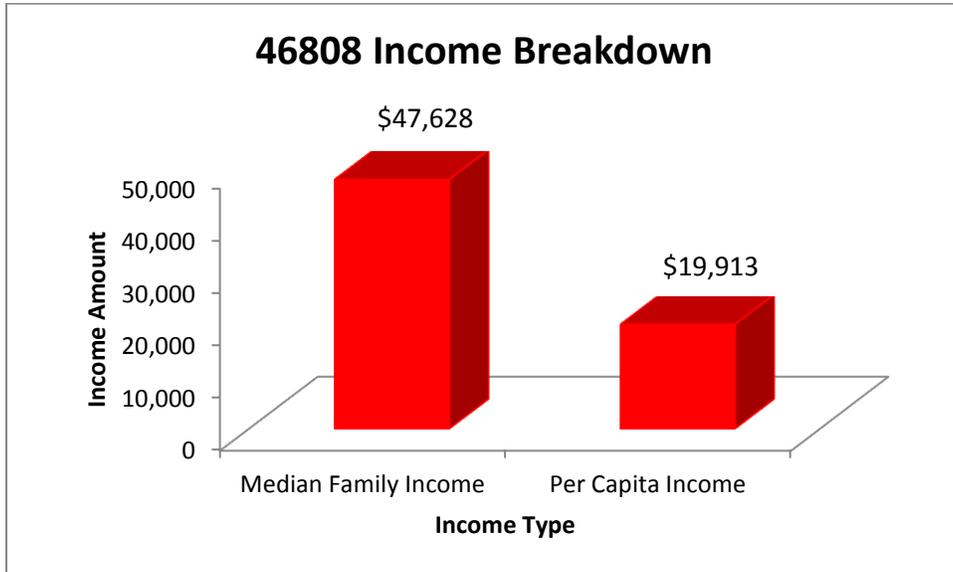
Three minor league sports teams, 15 museums and art galleries, 86 public parks, a zoo, orchestra, annual events like the Johnny Appleseed Festival and Three Rivers Festival, and Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne give residents plenty of things to do. Looking for a great sports deal? Turn to the Mad Ants, Fort Wayne’s NBA D-League team where spectators can watch up-and-coming basketball stars for as little as \$11 a game. (How could we not mention the Mad Ants, which has to be one of the strangest names for a sports team.)

General Motors, Lincoln Financial Group, Parkview Health System and Lutheran Health Network are among the leading job providers in Fort Wayne. Residents benefit from Indiana’s flat-rate individual income tax rate of 3.4 percent, among the lowest in the nation among states that collect it.

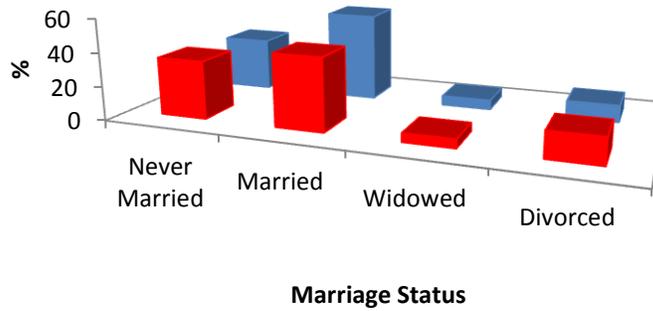
SOURCE: LIVABILITY.COM

Livability explores what makes small-to-medium sized cities great places to live. Through proprietary research studies, engaging articles and original photography and video, we examine topics related to community amenities, education, sustainability, transportation, housing and the economy. We then leverage that expertise to develop city rankings for a range of topics including small towns, college towns and our annual Top 100 Best Places to Live.

## Local Statistics for Fort Wayne, Indiana (46808)

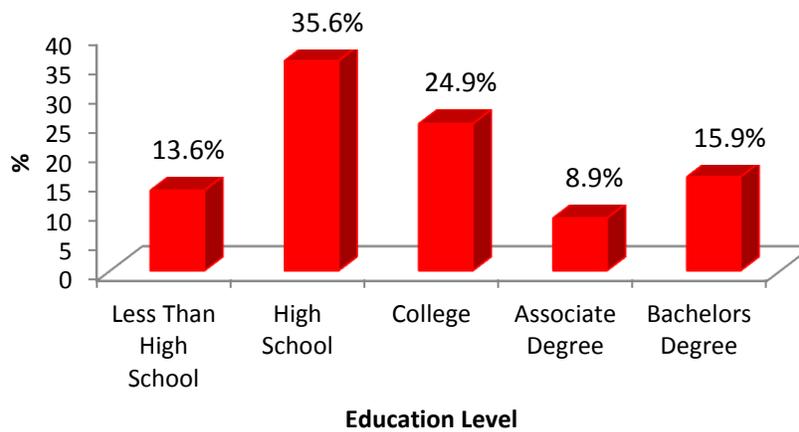


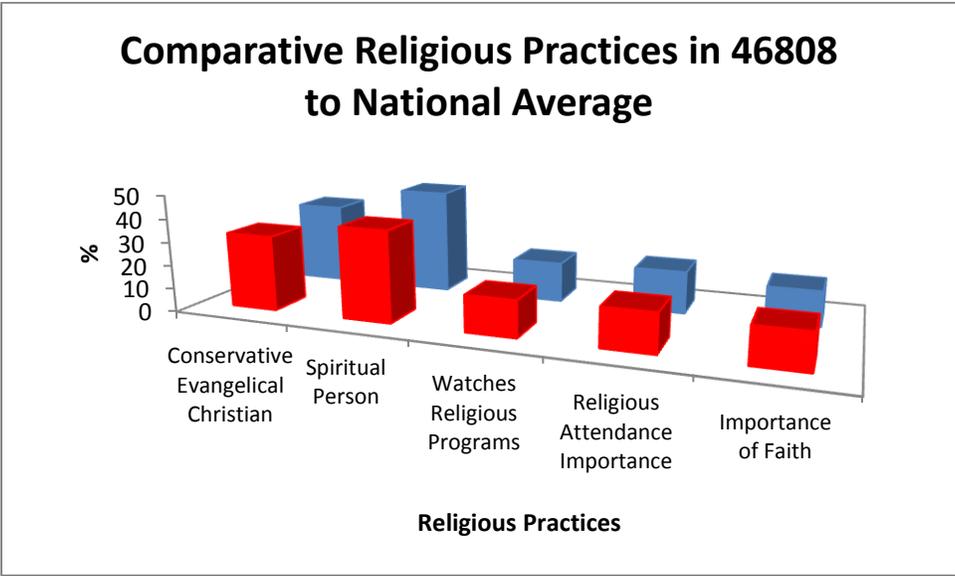
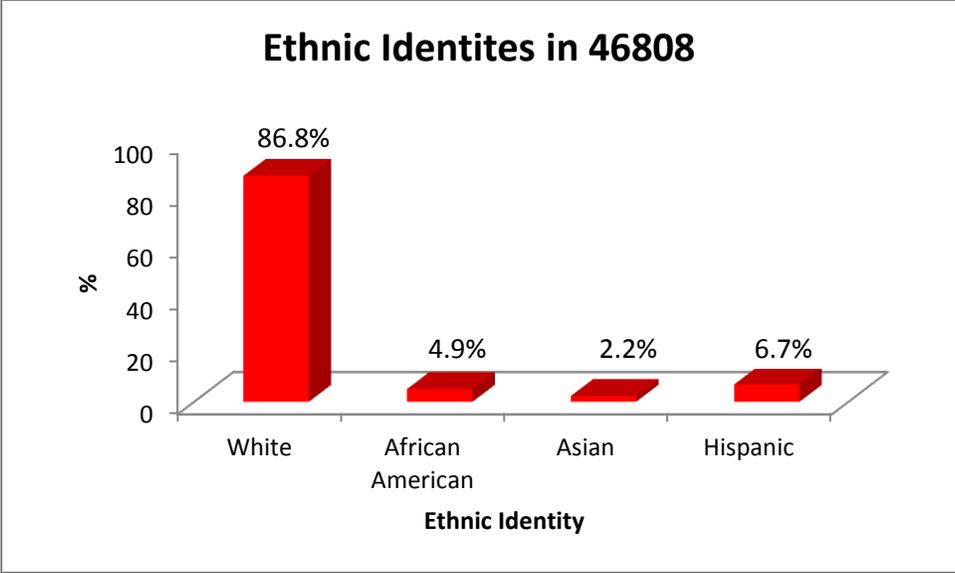
### Comparative Marriage Status of Population 15 Years and Older in 46808 to National Average



	NEVER MARRIED	MARRIED	WIDOWDED	DIVORCED
<b>46808</b>	<b>34.5%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>15.2%</b>
<b>USA</b>	<b>31.7%</b>	<b>52.6%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>	<b>10%</b>

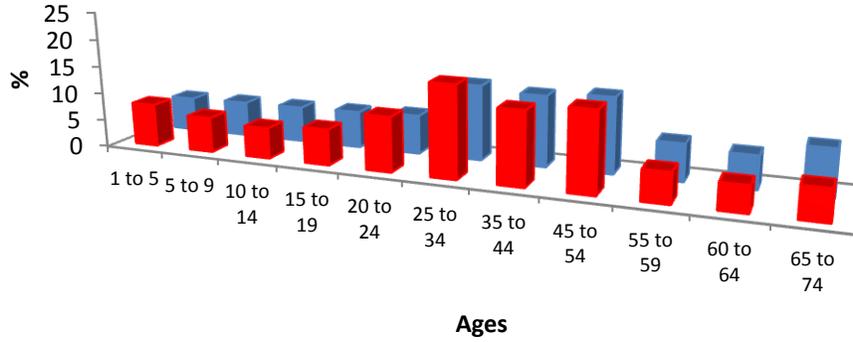
### Education Levels in 46808





	CONSERVATIVE EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN	SPIRITUAL PERSON	WATCHES RELIGIOUS PROGRAMS	RELIGIOUS ATTENDANCE IMPORTANT	IMPORTANCE OF FAITH
<b>46808</b>	<b>32.2%</b>	<b>38.9%</b>	<b>15.5%</b>	<b>16.4%</b>	<b>15.3%</b>
<b>USA</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>15%</b>

## Comparative Ages in 46808 to National Average



	1 TO 5	5 TO 9	10 TO 14	15 TO 19	20 TO 24	25 TO 34	35 TO 44	45 TO 54	55 TO 59	60 TO 64	65 TO 74
<b>46808</b>	<b>7.8%</b>	<b>6.4%</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	<b>9.9%</b>	<b>16.5%</b>	<b>13.2%</b>	<b>14.4%</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>
<b>USA</b>	<b>6.2%</b>	<b>6.4%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>7.1%</b>	<b>13.6%</b>	<b>12.8%</b>	<b>13.6%</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>8.3%</b>