

## **A Special Statement on Our Recent History**

We were not always Redeeming Grace Church; many of you know us by our former name, Immanuel Reformed Presbyterian Church. We are thankful for the faithfulness of God since he planted us as a congregation in 2007. Over the years, he has graciously transformed lives by the power of the gospel, equipped God's people for service, built families, and sent people to the ends of the earth with the good news of the kingdom of God. It is also needful for us to specifically address some of our recent history. If you do know us by the name "Immanuel," it's likely you know something of the negative publicity and very hard years recently suffered by our congregation.

Those years began with the revelation of minor on minor abuse in and around the congregation. As we worked through that painful chapter in our story, our former elders worked to follow the pertinent laws, to believe and support the victims, and to honor Christ. The church welcomed help from the outside. Even though we received some initial help from our now-former denomination (the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA)), in time we faced many months of determined opposition against our congregation and former leaders. Additionally, we were repeatedly painted in the worst possible light by media outlets. Because the tragic situation involved minors, many details could not and should not be shared publicly. While this means the full truth might likely never be told publicly in this life in defense of leaders who were wrongly accused, we would love for you to know the following about us:

First, we hate sin and we love justice. We hate the sins of abuse, we mourn with the victims and their families, and we pray for them and work for their healing. We love that the Lord is a God of justice who calls us to do justly as well. We have labored and will labor for justice to the glory of God.

Second, we believe the church should be a place of genuine safety. We have learned many valuable lessons and are committed to that safety in tangible ways. If you are interested in visiting or being a part of the congregation, please don't hesitate to ask any questions that might make you feel more safe.

Third, we believe in forgiveness. We regularly delight in God's forgiveness made possible through the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ and believe that same forgiveness should be a cornerstone of the church's life. We are thankful to be able to extend forgiveness to anyone who seeks it, including our former leaders, who freely acknowledged their failures in the process.

Because of these commitments, and because of an increasing commitment to the centrality of the gospel in our life and ministry, we are now an independent congregation. We lament that the RPCNA abandoned fundamental principles of justice and mercy in its dealing with our congregation. We came to realize that we could not cooperate with it any longer and began the process of leaving our denominational home in the fall of 2022.

The current elders of the congregation are thankful for the efforts of our former elders who served in an exceedingly difficult situation. The former elders acknowledged their weaknesses

early in the process and sought forgiveness for their failings. They have been forgiven. Redeeming Grace Church disregards the extreme and unbiblical disciplinary actions taken against these men in the past. We are thankful that our former elders continue to be part of the life of Redeeming Grace Church.

Our name change is not meant to hide our past but to signal our hopeful future as we seek a church government and life of the church that is faithful to Christ. Through the valley of tears, God has walked faithfully with us and, we hope, prepared us to serve people who aren't comfortable in many churches. If you take the opportunity to visit us, we hope you'll see a church that has been deeply humbled by weaknesses, a church that has lost the ability to look down on anyone, and a church that genuinely wants everything to be about Jesus. We invite you to come experience the redeeming grace of the Lord Jesus Christ with us.