

History

Grace Bible Church
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

Formation

Grace Bible Church formed in 1975. It was formed from a division from what was then St. Paul Memorial Church. (That division was later healed – Praise God!) The new congregation held its first meeting in February 1975, filed its incorporation papers with the state of Idaho in April, and had its first official meeting on June 22.

(Note: Grace Bible Church is organized as a non-profit corporation of the state of Idaho. Grace Bible Church is not registered as a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation of the federal government.)

The congregation's first meetings were at the **English Funeral Chapel** in Coeur d'Alene.

First Pastor: Ray (Lorene) Fitzugh – 1975-1984

Ray Fitzugh was the founding pastor of St. Paul Memorial Church and was called to be the first pastor of Grace Bible Church when it organized. Ray was a former Navy man who had trained at a Navy base in N. Idaho.

During Pastor Fitzugh's tenure, the **current building was purchased at 152 W Prairie Avenue in Hayden, ID**. The church housed an Accelerated Christian Education school which, at its peak, hosted 150 students. Additions to the original building included a two-story section with the sanctuary on the upper floor and the fellowship hall on the lower floor. The church also built a 5,000 sq ft gymnasium for school sports events. The school was the model ACE school for the Pacific Northwest for several years.

Second Pastor: Ron (Sandra) Pandolfi – 1984-1985

When Pastor Fitzugh resigned, he arranged for Ron Pandolfi to succeed him. Pastor Pandolfi resigned after a little more than a year.

Third Pastor (Interim): Wally (Ginger) Hutchins – 1985-1987

At Pastor Pandolfi's resignation, the church called Wally Hutchins as interim pastor. Wally had been the assistant pastor to Pastor Fitzugh.

Fourth Pastor: Ken (Elaine) Carr – 1987-1992

The church called Ken Carr as pastor in 1987. He resigned in early 1992.

Fifth Pastor: Paul (Roycee) Peabody – 1993-2021

After Pastor Carr's resignation, the church searched for another pastor. Paul Peabody was called in October 1992 and arrived in January 1993. In the early years of Pastor Peabody's tenure, **the church built a parsonage** for his family. The school, which had dwindled to a few students, was closed. Most families in the church were now home educating their children. Jim Miller was called as Assistant Pastor in 2003. The church grew from about 150 to over 400. Other events included remodeling the church basement from school room to fellowship hall,

beginning a biblical counseling ministry, remodeling the sanctuary to seat more people, and purchasing a new 10-acre property for future expansion. (That property has subsequently been sold.)

Sixth Pastor: Mitchell (Cissy) Martin – 2020-2022

Mitchell Martin was called to the church in November 2020 to work with Paul for a year and then assume his duties. He assumed responsibility as Senior Pastor in November 2021. In November 2022, it was discovered that Mitchell was plagiarizing the writings of other writers and presenting them as his own sermons. A time of great conflict resulted in the church. Mitchell resigned in December, several families left the church, and Paul Peabody was installed as Lead Elder in June 2023.

In August 2023, a Pulpit Committee was formed to seek a new pastor for Grace Bible Church.