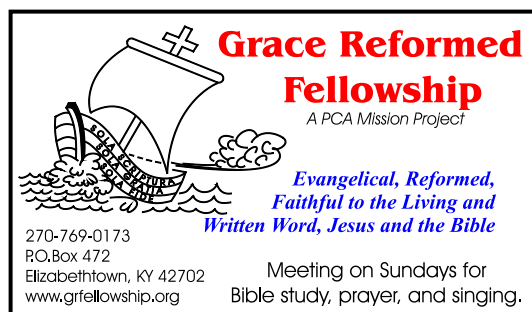


# *History of Grace Church Elizabethtown*

In February 1999, a group of families met to discuss the possibilities for a reformed church in Elizabethtown, KY. The pastor of Community Presbyterian Church, Dr. David Dively, in Louisville, KY was present at the meeting and advised the group on church planting methods, ways to proceed, and names of other people in the area that he thought might be interested.

Initially, some in the group began meeting on Sunday evenings for Bible study and fellowship. The group adopted the name *Grace Reformed Fellowship* and gained endorsement as an informal mission project of the PCA under the oversight of the Session at Community Presbyterian Church. This group met weekly for about 2 years.



**Grace Reformed Fellowship**  
A PCA Mission Project

*Evangelical, Reformed,  
Faithful to the Living and  
Written Word, Jesus and the Bible*

270-769-0173  
P.O. Box 472  
Elizabethtown, KY 42702  
www.grfellowship.org

Meeting on Sundays for  
Bible study, prayer, and singing.

An advertisement used in 2000

As the group became more established they began having a worship service once a month in lieu of the normal Sunday evening studies. The Reverend Vincent Kuo, assistant pastor at Community Presbyterian Church, started conducting monthly services. As the group continued to grow, conducting weekly services at a local church became a possibility. The church, House of Prayer Lutheran Church, was willing to accommodate the new church startup in the evening. Grace Reformed Fellowship became *Grace Reformed Church*.



**Brazil Mission Update**  
David Atkisson shares the vision of a  
new church plant in Vitoria, Brazil  
this Sunday 5:00 p.m. Worship at 6:00 p.m.

Meeting at the House of Prayer  
904 N. Mulberry Street in Elizabethtown  
Nursery provided

270-769-0173  
www.grfellowship.org

A mission church of the Presbyterian Church in America

**GRACE REFORMED CHURCH**  
"The message of grace with the authority of the reformation"

An advertisement used in 2001

The members also began meeting and petitioning with the Great Lakes Presbytery (which later split into 2 presbyteries) to gain recognition as a formal church-plant. Eventually, this led to an arrangement with Reverend Peter Bartuska, pastor of the Danville Presbyterian Church, to help with the official church plant. This occurred in the spring of 2001. Peter came weekly for about 3 months to preach and administer Communion. Other members of his church sometimes attended with him, including a praise team. On Monday mornings, Peter met with other local ministers to help establish a presence in the community. During this time and afterward other preachers helped fill the pulpit on occasion, including Jerry Williams. At this point there were about 5 families worshipping regularly with occasional visitors (30-40 attending). GRC met at House of Prayer through the remainder of 2001.

Beginning in January 2002 the church moved to Elizabethtown High School. Jerry Williams, a licensed but not ordained seminary student was hired to conduct weekly services. Ordained ministers from the presbytery came monthly to administer Communion. The group continued to



Congregation in 2003  
Student Pastor Jerry Williams on the left

**Standing for Christ  
Under Worldly Pressure**  
Desert Storm Chaplain David Peterson, Colonel, US Army Retired, will speak of his experiences in Saudi Arabia as the Senior Military Chaplain working for General Norman Schwarzkopf.

**Sunday, August 25, 9:45 am  
Elizabethtown High School**  
Dr. Peterson will also preach during Worship at 11:00 am.

Nursery provided. **270-769-0173** [www.grfellowship.org](http://www.grfellowship.org)

**GRACE REFORMED CHURCH**  
The Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)



An advertisement used in 2002

expand to 10-12 families with many families coming and going as their employment dictated. Early in 2002 the Church began supporting David and Lynn Atkisson and their mission work in Brazil. The services were wet with Sunday School meeting before the worship service. Fellowship dinners were started and held once a month. GRC continued to meet at EHS through the summer of 2004, when construction at the school severely impacted the usefulness of the facility. Providentially, the current building became available to rent, and GRF moved there in October.

After moving, services and activities continued in the same way, except the Worship Service started meeting before Sunday School. Men's and women's Bible studies met, Saturday VBS-type activities were held, some families moved away and others began attending. However, over the course of the year it became apparent that attendance was dropping, and some people who left expressed dissatisfaction with various things. Jerry Williams' health was declining as well and he was hospitalized several times as doctors diagnosed and tried to get his medication regulated. GRC was down to 3 families at this point and at a crossroads: to disband or to continue as they had been and pray for God's intervention. The Lord did intervene, by sending Army Chaplain Bill Manning and his family who together transfused those families with new energy and hope.

In January 2006, Jerry resigned due to a medical condition. Chaplain Bill Manning, who was serving as a chaplain recruiter without any official ecclesiastical responsibilities, agreed to serve as an interim pastor. The presbytery accepted the church's petition to allow Chaplain Manning to assume the title of Senior Pastor since he was outside his home presbytery. In addition, Doug Hess and Ben Duncan, both Southern Seminary students and both military chaplain candidates, joined Bill in filling the pulpit on a rotating basis. In July 2006, Doug's entry into the Air Force was delayed for a year, and a formal call was extended by the congregation to Doug as an Associate Pastor. He assumed most of the preaching duties and pastoral responsibilities to gain

pastoral experience. Bill Manning still played an active role in guiding and mentoring the church. Attendance steadily increased as did presence in the community.

In the fall of 2006, the Church established formed a Pastor Search Committee. The committee advertised and received many resumes. The work of reviewing and interviewing candidates took months. In the spring of 2007, one candidate was interested was invited to come and visit the congregation and the community. Following the visit a call was extended...and later declined.



Congregation in 2006  
Bill Manning, back row center, Doug Hess 3<sup>rd</sup> row right

Doug Hess left for active duty in the Air Force in August 2007. Again, Bill Manning was filling the pulpit by default, with other men filling in as needed. At about the same time, David Atkisson, the missionary to Brazil with MTW, had been waiting over a year for the Brazillian government to renew their visas and allow them to return to the mission field. During this period his mother became ill and he was in the process of moving back to Elizabethtown to help care for her. In the Fall 2007, GRC petitioned the presbytery to establish a cooperative agreement with MTW and allow David Atkission to accept a call as Interim Pastor at GRC. He was installed as the interim pastor in January 2008. After a fruitless period, the pastor search committee became convinced that David Atkisson was the best candidate to permanently fill the pulpit.

As this action was pursued, a parallel action was also initiated to move GRC from a mission church to a particular church. Formal training and selection processes were established to identify, nominate, and elect elders and deacons for the church. On July 27, 2008, the Ohio-Valley Presbytery conducted services in Elizabethtown to particularize Grace Reformed Church and install David Atkission the first Pastor. Peter Hill, Mike Nelson, and Mike Piscatello were installed as the ruling elders of the church. Joe Baird, Don Meinshausen, and Jerry Pierce were installed as deacons of the church.

In January 2011 the Session closed out a year long process to establish a proper mission and vision for GRC. As a part of the new vision and mission, the Session changed the name of the church to *Grace Church Elizabethtown*.