



GRACE
COMMUNITY CHURCH
— SEAL BEACH —

DIRECTOR OF STUDENT MINISTRIES

OPPORTUNITY PROFILE • GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH SEAL BEACH

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WELCOME LETTER FROM THE SENIOR PASTOR

Thank you for your interest in our search for a new Director of Student Ministries. I hope that in the next few pages you'll get a picture of who we are, what an exciting opportunity this is, and who we are hoping to find.

But before we get to that, I'd love to convince you why Grace Seal Beach is a place you can thrive. The pastors and directors at Grace regularly stay for a decade or more because of the opportunities to develop as a person and a leader here. In the interview process, I believe that you'll find a church that is committed to the urgency of the gospel while taking a sustainable view of the calling we have as a church, and supporting the long-term health of those who lead it.

Part of thriving in ministry is loving the community you live in and serve, and Seal Beach is an easy place to fall in love with. Seal Beach itself is a quaint beach town on the border of Los Angeles and Orange counties. Affectionately referred to as "Mayberry by the Sea," with an idyllic Main Street and a small town feel, our church is right in the heart of Seal Beach, literally (our building is a block from the sand, next to City Hall and Main Street) and spiritually (as we continually seek to find ways to serve and bless our neighbors).

But don't mistake the quiet small town of Seal Beach for a boring missional context. The immediately surrounding cities (Long Beach, Huntington Beach, Garden Grove and others) have about a million people, meaning that ministry here provides ample challenges and opportunities.



I like to think of Grace like a harbor. Harbors are safe, secure, and nice places to be. But ships aren't made for the harbor. They're made to be on the seas. In the same way, Grace is a secure and safe place to be, but it is not an end in itself. We are equipping members to live out their faith in an ever-increasingly secular world. We need to prepare them to be leaders on the sea, whether to serve as missionaries, begin non-profit ministries, or lead in their neighborhoods, family, or workplace.

That tradition is continuing with our current Associate Pastor, Tim Culling, who is leaving in June 2024 to join the Long Beach Church Collective, helping to minister to pastors in our greater area. We are overjoyed for him and the ministry that is getting his considerable talents, but we're going to miss him and his family. We have already called our current Director of Student Ministries to become our new Associate Pastor and now we need a new leader for our students.

If our vision for ministry connects with your heart, I'd love to talk with you.

In Christ,
Bob Wriedt, Senior Pastor



In the materials that follow, you'll read about our church. We share this so that you can get to know us, and evaluate whether we are a potential fit for one another.

Further information about our statements of faith and staff can be found at <https://www.gracesealbeach.org/about>.

FAQ DIRECTOR OF STUDENT MINISTRY SEARCH

Why is the position available now?

Our Associate Pastor (Tim Culling) is completing eight-years of service at Grace and moving on to serve with the Long Beach Church Collective. Our current Director of High School and College Ministry (Jason Ricafranca) is taking the role of Associate Pastor (Jason will continue to lead the College Ministry). Additionally, our Director of Middle School (Randi Kisner) is moving to serve as Director of Communications. Both Jason and Randi are deeply committed to the new leader's success.

What is the size of the ministry currently?

The Middle School group averages about 12 students per meeting, the High School group a few less. The groups were each slightly larger before COVID, and we hope to see them grow in the years to come.

Who would be my teammates in ministry?

Both Middle School and High School have strong teams of adult volunteers who are there (almost) every week to lead small groups, help with teaching, and lead activities. Middle School is supported by Regina, Kristin, and Ben, and High School volunteers include Greg, Lori, Annelise, Steve, Eileen, and Tim.

At the staff level, we have a team of three pastors and five directors (including you!). We're all committed to supporting each other, pulling for each other, and cultivating an emotionally healthy staff environment. You would be supervised by the Associate Pastor.

What is the size of the church?

Currently, we average about 310 people in the worship services on Sundays, plus about 50 kids and students. We have been steadily growing the last couple of years, but understandably took a step back on growth during COVID.

I saw in the profile that the church is part of the Charis Fellowship. What is that? What are some of the other theological influences of the church?

The Charis Fellowship (formerly known as the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches) is a small denomination of about 220 churches, mostly in the Midwest (there are about 15 in Southern California). Most of our church leaders come from churches outside the Charis Fellowship, so there's no expectation that our new Director would have a background with the denomination.

If it helps to orient the Charis Fellowship relative to larger denominations, it is similar to the Evangelical Free, Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA), or certain Baptist groups.

While we enjoy our partnerships in the Charis Fellowship, we also have been deeply influenced by Biola University (where many of our leaders attended seminary) and The Gospel Coalition.

What does your church think about (controversial issue X)?

Our church's [Statement of Belief](#) is based on the classical creeds of the church and is our expectation for all incoming church members (including staff). Additionally, we have a second tier list of "Teaching Positions" on disputed matters. Members do not have to agree in their conscience with all of these, but our expectation is that all leaders will teach them in their words and their lives. We value Christian freedom at Grace, and expect that people can agree to disagree on many matters while still living in fellowship together.

What is the church's approach to gender in leadership?

We are a complementarian church for elders/pastors. We embrace female leaders in all other leadership roles, including directors. Female and male candidates are both encouraged to apply for this role, as long as they are enthusiastic about working in a complementarian setting for eldership.

What is the salary range for the position? How does that relate to the cost of living in the community?

The salary range for this position is \$63,000-68,000/year. This position is eligible to be a commissioned or licensed minister and qualify for a portion of that salary to be a tax-exempt housing allowance. Additionally, the church provides medical benefits for the staff person and their family and a 5% retirement plan match in a 403(b).

While the cost of living in the immediate area of Seal Beach is very high, there are a lot of nice communities close by (within 15 minutes) where this salary can support a good quality of life.

OUR VALUES

FAITHFUL COMPASSION

On the surface, Seal Beach is a community with it all together. The homes are nice, the schools are excellent, and the lifestyle is comfortable. But affluence can lead to isolation, loneliness and addictions; therefore, many of our ministries seek to engage our community to experience God's compassion as we express the Gospel. We have a heritage of being a rooted, steadfast church in Seal Beach for decades with life-changing ministries, not just short-term fixes. We live this out through our "Compassion Ministry Partners" (including Long Beach Rescue Mission, Precious Lamb Preschool, Prison Fellowship, Horizon Pregnancy Clinic, and others), hosting recovery groups on campus, and maintaining an active "Stephen Ministry."

BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW

We want to be a church that is quick to listen to God's Word and eager to do what it says. Since the Seal Beach area puts a high emphasis on education, we seek to teach people the Bible in a way that connects with the challenges of the culture today. You'll notice this in the commitment to verse-by-verse expository teaching in the Sunday sermon as well as in the Life Groups, Children's Ministry, and Youth Ministries. For our 75th anniversary, we read through the whole Bible together as a church. We want our student ministries to be rooted in the Scriptures.

PARTICIPATORY WORSHIP

We have a multi-generational mix of young and old, new families, single and college-age worshipers. We believe in helping everyone connect with God, both on Sunday and during the week. Our current Pastor of Worship, Chris Howard, brings a thoughtful and intentional plan for our Sunday worship, as well as providing devotional resources for weekday worship.

MISSIONAL LIFE

We are each called to participate in the mission of Jesus, whether we are a missionary in Japan, on church staff, a retiree, work in the marketplace, or stay at home with kids. But we especially delight in sending and supporting our long-term missionaries, many of whom are sent out through "Encompass," the Charis Fellowship's mission organization. This includes prayer, short-term trips, and our annual "Project Mission Wish," where we provide Christmas gifts for missionaries.

KNOWN BY NAME

We value creating an environment to develop authentic relationships. Our medium size affords us the chance to connect regularly with other people who know us and whom we know, but we are big enough that it is not automatic. We want to be a church where everyone has a group of people who know them, to the point where they can live out the "one another" teachings of Scripture. In addition to Life Groups, we do this through special events, such as Grace at the Beach, the annual All-Church picnic, Summer Dinner Parties, and others.

OUR PHILOSOPHY OF STUDENT MINISTRIES

All of our ministries have a philosophy document that defines the mission, values, strategy and measures for the ministry. This document communicates expectations from the Board of Elders to each of the ministry leaders.

While the new Director of Student Ministries will have the opportunity to speak into potential changes to this philosophy, we want you to know what we value and where our heart is.

The following is taken from the Philosophy of Student Ministries document:

I. MISSION

The underlying mission of the church is to make disciples of Jesus (Matt. 28:19-20). Unique to youth ministry is a transition from childhood into adulthood, during which students develop a sense of individual identity, distinct from their parents. Part of that development includes a decision point of whether to make a lifelong commitment to follow Jesus. Therefore, the mission of youth ministry at Grace Community Church of Seal Beach is:

To help middle and high school students become lifelong followers of Jesus Christ who find their identity in him (UP - Gospel), their place in his family, the church (IN - Community), and their joy in joining his work in the world (OUT - Mission).

II. VALUES

In addition to the all-church values, there are youth-specific values that will be instilled in student ministry at our church. Because adolescence is often a time of searching for identity, a longing to be loved, and a questioning of authority, students often wonder who they are, what makes them special, where they belong and



what their life is to be about. Acknowledging this unique season of life, we long to instill these four youth-specific values in our students:

Identity in Christ

Students learn that their identity comes from their relationship with God the Father through faith in Jesus Christ - a faith that is their own, carries them through life's challenges, and is based on God's unconditional love for them, not their own goodness or efforts.

A place to belong

Being welcomed by a group of peers and caring adult staff and volunteers is a great introduction to the rest of the church family. Students learn that because of Jesus Christ, they are brought into the body of Christ (the church) where they're loved and provided for. Lord willing, this experience will inspire lifelong community and service in the local church.

Connected to others

Building relationships that are characterized by meaningful conversations, shared experiences,

and lots of fun will keep the kids coming back for more. This connection is often the start of a young person's openness to the church and the Lord of the church, Jesus.

Outwardly focused

Recognizing that what Jesus has done for them isn't to end with them, students will be encouraged and given opportunities to share their faith and to show their faith. The gospel that brings them into the church is the same gospel that sends them out to the world. Participating in God's worldwide mission is the great responsibility and joy of every follower of Jesus.

III. STRATEGY

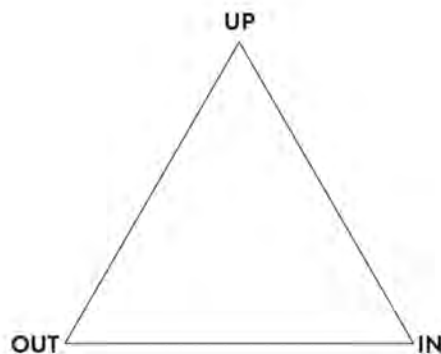
In order to accomplish the mission and to instill the values listed above, the following strategies will be in place for Student Ministry:

- (Grow) Develop Christian community - We will have regular Sunday and mid-week gatherings emphasizing the unconditional love and belonging that students crave. A biblical worldview grows and Christian community is developed as students learn how to study the Bible, practice prayer, are engaged in worship and are connected with peers and mentors in small groups.
- (Invite) Conduct regular, attractional events - We will provide opportunities for students to bring their unchurched friends to an environment where they can be themselves, feel a sense of control and enjoy being with their peers. In addition, we will offer age-specific and all-church retreats that make space to hear from God and consider His call on their lives.
- (Serve) Do for others - We will help students learn to serve as disciples of Jesus, either with their peers, with those younger than themselves and, with guidance, throughout the broader church. Also, we'll encourage them to see that their service extends to the world and we'll provide opportunities through outreach events and ministries of the church to love their neighbors as themselves.

- (Stick) Emphasize intergenerational relationships - We will connect each student with 5 adults who know and love Jesus, both within youth ministry and throughout the larger church body. Our adult volunteers play a huge role in this happening. These connections will be based on common interests with the goal of fostering discipleship and instilling a lifelong desire for Christian community.
- (Partner) Work together with parents - We will do this by having accessible youth and pastoral staff, hosting events (in cooperation with the Associate Pastor) on parenting issues related to adolescents, and providing parents with dates and details related to the youth ministry calendar.

IV. MEASURES

It's hard to measure what's happening in the heart of anyone, including youth. That being said, consider this helpful diagnostic tool.



UP - emphasizes our relationship with God

IN - emphasizes our relationships with other Christians

OUT - emphasizes our relationship with the the unsaved world

We know the students are..

Growing UP

- When they're spending their own time with God and growing in obedience to God's Word
- When they're committing or recommitting their lives to Christ; being baptized
- When their parents are testifying to their growing faith and love of God

Leaning IN

- When they're cultivating authentic relationships with peers and mentors (note the % of students connected to at least 5 Christian adults outside of their parents)
- When they're regularly present at meetings, events and service opportunities (note the % of students serving in the church outside of youth ministry)
- When they're sacrificially loving one another as Jesus commanded (note how active students are at welcoming and including new students)

Moving OUT

- When their compassion for the poor and needy is present and growing
- When they're bringing their non-churched friends to meetings and events
- When they're communicating the gospel to their friends through their words and their lives

EXPECTATIONS FOR CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Every individual is created by God with unique talents and gifting, and we recognize that a change in leadership will also bring about change in the ministry. But we are looking for continuity in the following areas:

CONTINUITY

- We want to continue to have the students participate in the all-ages worship of the church and programs like the church picnic, women's ministry events, Threefold communion, etc.
- We would like to continue to have two age-specific programs (Middle School and High School), rather than one joint youth program. That said, we are open to some joint programming, especially as it pertains to summer camp and Sunday mornings.
- We value student participation and engagement in shaping the traditions, special events, and holiday celebrations of our Study Ministry and would like to continue respecting the importance of integrating student input/feedback while still allowing room for fresh ideas.

CHANGE

- We are moving from two part-time student ministry staff to one full-time, which means that there will be some needs for changes in the timing of the programs. (Middle School and High School currently both meet on Thursday evenings as separate groups).
- Strong Biblical teaching has been an important part of our current ministry, but as we combine responsibility for middle and high school ministry, we realize that preparing 3 "sermons" a week is unsustainable. We expect that use of curriculum and support of our leadership can help to strike a sustainable approach to teaching.



OUR CHURCH HISTORY

For eighty years, Grace has been knit into the fabric of the Seal Beach community. We began as a church plant from Grace Brethren Long Beach, with the goal to reach kids and students in the neighboring town of Seal Beach. In 1944, we were able to purchase property a block from the Pacific Ocean and build the chapel that still stands today, and is still used by our youth ministry to tell students in Seal Beach about Jesus.

In the 1970's the church grew under the leadership of Roy Roberts and built a gym and expanded Christian education building. The gym would eventually be converted into our Sanctuary that we use now.

In 1984 the church changed its name from Grace Brethren Church to Grace Community Church of Seal Beach, to reflect the emphasis and value we place on Grace being a "community church" in the fullest sense of the word. Don Shoemaker became the Senior Pastor at the same time, and served our church in that role for 27 years, before transitioning to his current role as "Pastor Emeritus" and Seal Beach police chaplain.

In 2012, in concert with Pastor Don's retirement, our church went through a re-evaluation of our ministry strategy, values, and future. We were encouraged to notice the good work that God has done throughout our church for generations, especially in the areas of compassion, leadership development, and biblical teaching.

At that time, we developed an intentional succession plan that helped us to navigate handing the reins of the church to the next generation. Long-time Associate Pastor Steve Williams served as Senior Pastor from 2012-2017, with Bob Wriedt moving from Pastor of Young Adults (2006-2011) to Associate Pastor (2012-2017) to Senior Pastor (2017-current). Both Pastors Don and Steve continue to serve as active members of our church in their retirement.

Over the last few years, our church undertook a major revitalization to the facilities of our church, called "Renewing Grace." The goal of the project was to show the community what a vibrant, healthy church we are, and to make the most of the space that God has entrusted us with. The project is complete and has been paid off completely.





Our church is now experiencing growth, both numerically in the worship services and in seeing people come to Christ and be baptized. Our pre-Covid attendance averaged about 400 adults in worship on Sundays, with about 100 kids and students in Children's Ministry and Youth Ministry. Our building space can only contain a limited amount of additional growth on Sunday mornings, so our growth plan is through multi-site and replication. Our prayer is that we can train leaders and grow our church to the point of being able to open revitalization campuses of our church in the 605 freeway corridor over the next few years.



STUDENT MINISTRY LEADERSHIP HISTORY

Jason Ricafranca has led our High School Ministry since October 2017. With our current Associate Pastor Tim Culling sensing a call to join the Long Beach Church Collective, we have appointed Jason as our next Associate Pastor. In addition, Randi Kisner has led our Middle School Ministry for a decade, but will be transitioning to our Communications Director role. Tim and Randi have afforded us a long off-ramp, with Tim departing and Randi transitioning in June 2024, and it is our hope to have our new Director of Student Ministries in place before Tim and Randi leave their current roles and Jason assumes the role of Associate Pastor full time.



OUR COMMUNITY

The City of Seal Beach has a uniqueness that sets it apart from the surrounding megalopolis of greater Los Angeles and Orange Counties. Seal Beach is geographically separated from the surrounding areas by water - the Pacific Ocean to the south, the San Gabriel River to the west, and Anaheim Bay and the National Wildlife Refuge to the east.

The city consists of several distinct neighborhoods and areas. Old Town is the original portion of Seal Beach along the coast and the site of Grace Community Church. The Hill, College Park East and College Park West are fairly typical suburban neighborhoods. Of the 26,000 residents of Seal Beach, the largest population center is Leisure World, a 9,000-person retirement community for those 55 and older.

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Over half of the city's geography is made up of the Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach, which houses several hundred military personnel. The inhabitants tend to be young military families, many with children, and some of whom attend or have attended Grace Community Church. The Boeing Company is

the largest employer in the city with significant office space and a variety of industrial buildings. Three miles from Grace Community Church are the Veterans' Administration Hospital in Long Beach and California State University with a student population of more than 30,000.

During the pandemic we are all living with, we've had to reduce our in-person ministries, but our church has remained close through the continuation of virtual life groups and worship services. Out of the abundance of financial giving we've experienced in spite of the disruptions, we've been able to contribute \$30,000 to the [Long Beach Church Collective](#), supporting churches in low-income, urban areas nearby.

About 39% of our church's members and regular attenders live in Seal Beach. Another 30% live in neighboring Long Beach, including a majority of our Ministry Leadership Team. The remaining 31% live in other surrounding areas, such as Garden Grove, Huntington Beach, Cypress, Lakewood, Westminster, and Los Alamitos.

For additional information:

<http://sealbeachchamber.org>

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seal_Beach,_California



OUR CHURCH LEADERSHIP

Grace Community Church of Seal Beach is affiliated with the [Charis Fellowship](#) (formerly known as the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches). The church is independently chartered, has its own constitution and by-laws, and is governed by a Board of Elders. The Board of Elders has final oversight responsibilities for the affairs of the church. Our senior pastor, associate pastor, and worship pastor serve on the Board of Elders. We have a complementarian view of gender with regard to our pastors and those who serve on our Board of Elders.

Our three full-time pastors form the "Pastoral Leadership Team." Our paid staff includes an additional six ministry directors who work with the pastors on the "Ministry Leadership Team."

Grace has a history of long-term staff, due to the support of the congregation and the value we place on long-term fruitfulness rather than short-term results.

Our church is committed to the long-term health of staff, so there is a culture of respecting and supporting Sabbath, vacation time, and sick leave. Our elders are thoughtful and caring men who see a significant part of their role to include protecting the ministry staff from being overworked.

We are committed to developing a leadership team of lifetime learners, which is supported financially through the provision of resources for staff to



attend conferences, purchase books, and other continuing education opportunities.

We want staff to have the tools they need to succeed, so we provide new computers to staff, office space, a cell-phone stipend, reimbursements for mileage on hospital and other ministry visits.

All members of our "Ministry Leadership Team" are eligible to go through Grace's ministerial commissioning process, which would make them eligible for a clergy housing allowance.

All members of the Ministry Leadership Team are expected to become members of Grace Community Church and participate actively in the life of the church.

THE ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR OF STUDENT MINISTRIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

Now that you've learned a bit about us, here's what the scope of the role includes and the key qualifications:

SCOPE

The Director of Student Ministries will

- Lead youth group programs that attract students, expose them to the Gospel, disciples those who have accepted Christ, equips them to live faithfully in the world, gets them involved in broader church life and ministry, and encourages them to continually grow in their faith to the point of independent involvement in a local church after student ministry.
- Provide leadership for both High School and Middle School Ministries.
- Recruit, train, supervise, and shepherd volunteer staff. This will include developing expected responsibilities of leaders, conducting regular team meetings, ensuring conformity with all church policies and applicable laws and regulations for the health and safety of the youth, and equipping and encouraging them to love and disciple students.
- Develop parent communication, support, and participation. There will be regular communication with parents on program activities, as well as offer regular opportunities for parent input and feedback.
- Plan, coordinate, conduct, and evaluate all aspects of Sunday school, midweek gatherings, retreats, missions trips and monthly activities. This will include regular communication with the Associate Pastor, managing an annual budget, and necessary record keeping.

Qualifications

The Director of Student Ministries will:

- Be a mature disciple of Jesus Christ who engages in personal daily worship with God.
- Be able to teach the Bible effectively to students.
- Have some formal theological training (Christian college or seminary degree preferred), manifesting a thoughtful and coherent understanding of the Gospel and Biblical discipleship.
- Exhibit enthusiasm for our Statements of Faith, commitment to our teaching positions, and support for Charis Fellowship distinctives.
- Have a background of proven student outreach, volunteer recruitment and development.
- Have administrative skills with experience working in collaborative teams on a previous church staff.
- Commit to full-time ministry at Grace Community Church of Seal Beach.

OUR SEARCH PROCESS

Thank you for reading through the Opportunity Profile! We hope that you have a better sense of who we are and the opportunity that Grace provides. So, what's the next step?

1. Download and fill out the "Personal Information Form" ([available here](#)). Email your response and your resume to bob@gracesealbeach.org
2. After the team has had a chance to review your submission, a member will call you to have a brief conversation and arrange the first interview with the other members of the search team.
3. Interview with a subset of the search team members. (We would prefer to meet in person, but for candidates out of the area, Zoom is fine)
4. Interview with the full search team. (in-person or over Zoom)
 - a. Additional interviews, as needed.
5. Advance to the candidate process (in-person week at our church)
 - a. Complete psychological testing [Note: We require this of all Directors and Pastors prior to their call to our church. It is a two-hour process of taking an easy survey on a computer, followed by a one-hour meeting with a therapist. The goals are to help identify candidates with potential problematic pathology as well as recognize what traits candidates have that would make it difficult for them to succeed in this role (for example, extreme problems with change, irrational anger at authority, etc.). We understand this is a vulnerable step for any potential candidate to take, but it has proven helpful to find the staff that fit best, and we honor the confidentiality of the results; only three members of the Board of Elders will see the psychologist's letter explaining the results. The church will pay for all the testing. We wait until the near-end of the process, so as not to put unnecessary burden on those just starting a conversation with us.]
 - b. Meet with volunteer leaders from Student Ministry.
 - c. Meet with members of the congregation/parents for a Q&A session.
 - d. Meet with other staff leaders from the church.
 - e. Meet with the Board of Elders.
6. The Call
7. The Search Team becomes the Transition Team that helps the new director relocate and succeed in their new role.