

## PROFILE OF LOS ALTOS GRACE BRETHREN CHURCH

**L**os Altos Grace Brethren Church (LAGBC) is a multi-generational congregation in Long Beach, California. Long Beach is a progressive and diverse<sup>1</sup> city with more than 500,000 people<sup>2</sup> making it the 6th largest city in California. In the metro area of Los Angeles, it is only 20 miles south of Downtown LA. Long Beach is best known as the permanent home of the former cruise liner Queen Mary and the Long Beach Grand Prix.



LAGBC is located in a stable and friendly neighborhood in east Long Beach dubbed Los Altos<sup>3</sup> (hence the church name). Embedded in the neighborhood is Cal State University Long Beach<sup>4</sup>, the 3rd largest campus of the California State University system with a student body exceeding 35,000 students. Although the church facility is located in Long Beach at the southern edge of Los Angeles County, LAGBC has many families who live in neighboring Orange County as well.

The Stearns Street property was originally given by the Grace Brethren Church of Long Beach<sup>5</sup> as a new location for a Christian elementary school. The school didn't survive and the church was founded in 1953. The church continued to grow and undertook building the auditorium and fellowship hall in 1957. The church campus added offices and education wing in 1967.



Los Altos Brethren School (LABS)<sup>6</sup> started as a ministry under the umbrella of LAGBC in 1972. LABS is a single track K-6 elementary school with the ability to serve an enrollment of 175 students. The church also operates a preschool with a daily license of 84 students. LABS offers a dynamic education from a developmental perspective in a loving and supportive environment. Our goals are to provide a high level of academic instruction coupled with character development, training in the scriptures and lessons in walking with Jesus.



### OUR MISSION:

As the people of God known as the Los Altos Grace Brethren Church, our mission is to share the Good News about Jesus with people from all walks of life, teaching those who believe to pattern their lives after the life of Christ by gathering them into communities that foster an atmosphere of togetherness and commonality in which each individual enjoys a deep, growing, abiding relationships with God and others.<sup>7</sup>

1 <http://www.presstelegram.com/social-affairs/20150513/long-beach-is-second-most-diverse-city-in-us-report-finds>

2 <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/0643000>

3 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Los\\_Altos,\\_Long\\_Beach,\\_California](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Los_Altos,_Long_Beach,_California)

4 <http://CSULB.edu>

5 <http://GraceLB.org>

6 <http://LosAltosSchools.org>

7 <http://LosAltosGrace.org/about-us/> We encourage you to surf around this page to find our values, strategies, statement of faith and more.

## OUR LEADERSHIP:

The Bible teaches that Jesus "is the head of the body, the church..." (Colossians 1:18) and we zealously keep Him at the Head of our local church. We believe that leadership is through serving and shepherding others, not through positions of authority. We do have a robust Community of Elders and a host of staff and lay leaders.<sup>8</sup> Our staff are from diverse backgrounds and vocations and are very stable in that most have been with our church for 10 years or more. We are excited for the recent approval of our congregation to pursue adding more staff to expand the ministry of our church.



## OUR MINISTRIES:

Our preschool and elementary school are both "outreach schools," meaning students and families don't have to be Christians to attend. Thus, our schools are the biggest outreach of LAGBC and we are adding a family pastor to our staff to bulk up our impact with the school families.

We do have a full slate of ministries on Sunday mornings with multi-generational worship service at 10:30am including contemporary worship and a message from God's Word. Children 1st through 5th grade are included through the worship time, and then are dismissed for a more kid-friendly message and activities. Sundays we have approximately 150-200 people on campus. At 9:00am each Sunday, we have a full age-oriented Family Bible Hour including nursery up through senior adults.

At the beginning of 2017, we have re-emphasized the need for small/home groups that we call "Grace Groups" so that our church family can be in community and on mission during the week as well. We have a variety of regular Bible Studies as well: some groups spring up for a season, and others have been going for years.



Our church believes in the use of retreats as a powerful tool the Lord can use to transform people. We advocate retreats and utilize them for almost every ministry in our church family. Our largest one is a weeklong Camp at Green Oak Ranch in Vista, California targeted at first through sixth grade children. This camp is tailored for those children, but has a very intentional leadership development plan for our middle, high school and college students as counselors and counselor

assistants. Camp involves many leaders and up to 60% of the families in our church. This important annual tradition happens the first week of August each year.

We have a long and rich heritage of investing in students. Currently, we have about 25 students we minister to in the Middle School age and another 35 in the High School Ministry. We have more than 40 young adults who have been in the sphere of our church who we are intentionally pursuing. The church is invested in the local campus of Cal State Long Beach ministry primarily through partnership with the Japanese Ministries of Greater LA<sup>9</sup>. A new "Grace Group" for young adults is also being offered.

Our mission interests spread from local ministries to the uttermost parts of our globe. We provide regular opportunities to go and engage cross-culturally: in our SoCal sphere and around the world. For more than 65 years, LAGBC has been an outpost of our Lord's mission in Long Beach, CA. We believe our church family has a bright future and hope you will join us until He comes!

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<sup>8</sup> <http://LosAltosGrace.org/about-us/our-leadership/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/encompassjapaneseofgreaterla/>