

A photograph of a group of people sitting around a table in what appears to be a meeting or discussion. The people are engaged in conversation, with some looking towards the camera and others looking at each other. The setting is indoors, possibly a conference room or a community space. The lighting is warm and focused on the people at the table.

GRACE
insider

making disciples

// *feature* //

Pilot Groups
featured on pg. 10
graceb3.org/pilot

/february

Prayers of the Editor

by chelsy reed



This month our Field Staff feature is on Alan and Pearl Bourne (pg. 4). Alan has been vetting and consulting with a pastor in Kenya who is serving in the slums. The slums have arisen in the past few decades in Mombasa and other parts of northern and eastern Kenya due to radical Muslim militia activity that is steadily spreading through eastern Africa.

But why am I writing about it here? In 2010 I had the great honor to go with a small team to Kenya and another unnamed Muslim country in Africa. When we went, Kenya was considered to be one of the safest countries in Africa for travelers... Late in 2019, a bus was stopped

in north eastern Kenya and nine Kenyan Christians were separated from other passengers, shot and killed because they refused to recite the Shahada, an Islamic creed.

It's surreal to me to think that we were traveling in similar areas of Kenya just a few years ago where it is now much more dangerous to tread.

However, just a few days before the bus shooting in Kenya my family and I were in Epcot in Disney World where Christmas festivities were in full swing. The first sound I remember hearing was a choir singing "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen." Immediately, I was flooded

with emotion and shock that such a song was being sung at Disney. Later in the evening, we walked by an candlelighting processional where the choir sung Christmas hymns and Isabella Rossellini read aloud from the Christmas story in Luke 2.

As I reflect on all these events, it turns my heart towards praying for the Christians around the world, and those who will choose to follow Christ: that they will be strong, that they will have hope in Him, that Alan's pastor friend in Kenya would continue doing a work well worth working for, and that God would be glorified in the most unlikely of places.



“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’ - Matthew 25:40

TOP TEN NEEDS

1. Canned meats
2. Canned or dry beans
3. Tomato products
4. Peanut butter
5. Canned fruits or 100% Fruit juices
6. Canned veggies
7. Pasta & rice
8. Soap, shampoo & conditioner
9. Feminine hygiene items
10. Toilet paper

Drop-off Sundays
Feb. 2, 9 & 16

We'll have a collection location right next to the info desk in the foyer of the North Liberty Campus to collect items.

There's a little competition between each kids' classroom to see who can rake in the most donations, but who is counting? We are! Bring it on!



SNOW CAPPED HORIZONS

After bouncing around between Mexico and a southeast Asian country, Alan and Pearl Bourne have landed back in Colorado, their homeland and continue to serve abroad with SERVED.

In October of 2019 the Bournes were able to make the transition back to Colorado, which has been a long running goal for them. They ran into adoption issues while they were trying to come back about two years ago, took a stint in Mexico and then went back to Asia. It's been quite the roller coaster, but they are really back now. They even arrived in time to celebrate Pearl's mother's 89th birthday! God is good.

Pi, their adopted son, is so happy to be back with Anna, his big sister in Colorado. They've been playing in all the snow, shoveling out vehicles like pros and letting their imaginations run wild. One of their first agenda items after returning to the states was to trek down to Texas to visit their

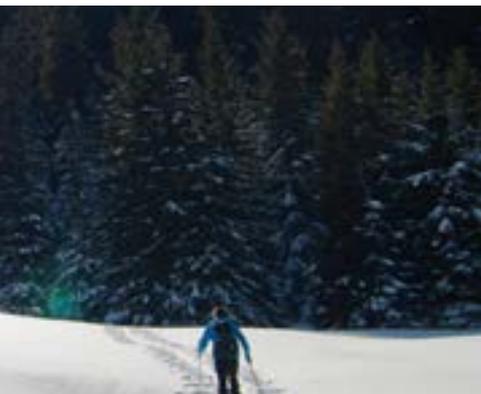
daughter and son-in-law and new baby grandson, Jack. They'd waited four months for the joy of doing so.

As the Bournes reacclimate to state-side living they are still working missionally as Alan is the International Director of SERVED (served.ngo). In 2019 Alan was able to visit Mombasa, Kenya, to help evaluate





what SERVED might do to help Pastor Alex as he ministers in the Muslim dominated slums. Pastor Alex has been serving in Mombasa for over 20 years and has been used by God to start an elementary school which provides a hot meal and education. The goals that SERVED has initiated for further work in Mombasa include 1) training and consulting with school administrators, 2) raising up pastors and church planters, and 3) consulting and raising funds to drill three wells in different slum locations. Alan is also working on a project in Kasese, Uganda. For more information on the Mombasa goals or to get the newsletter from the Bournes, contact the church office at office@graceb3.org.



2020

February

CALENDAR of events



A Pilot Community Group is a journey devoted to learning the fundamentals of Community Group life. Community Groups are a core part of who we are as a church. This group will be a great way for you to join into group life at Grace Community. Learn more and sign-up at: graceb3.org/pilot
Tuesdays Feb. 4 - April 7 • 6:30-8 PM on the North Liberty Campus



If you are wondering what it's all about and why we do what we do at Grace, this will be very helpful for you! Attending class does not commit you to being baptized if you are not ready. But if you would like to be baptized, attendance at both parts of the class is mandatory. Learn more and sign-up at: graceb3.org/baptism
Feb. 16 & 23 • 11 AM on the North Liberty Campus

2 Getting to Know Grace

Join us at Getting to Know Grace to hear God's story, learn Grace's story and share your story. This is a great starting point to get connected and plugged in at Grace. graceb3.org/gtkg

Feb. 2 • 11 AM on the North Liberty Campus



4 Women's Bible Study

In our second semester of the Women's Bible Study, we'll work through the "God of Covenant" study covering Genesis 12-50. graceb3.org/wbs

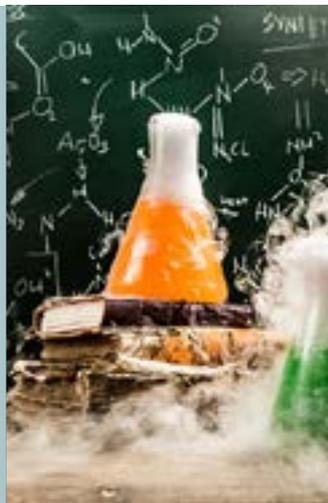
Feb. 4 - Apr. 10 • on the North Liberty Campus
Tuesdays 7-8:30 PM or
Fridays 9-10:30 AM

23 Chemistry Show Children's Ministry

Be here for an educationally entertaining and high-energy science show that is fast-paced, and provides audience involvement, and an inspirational message for all ages!

graceb3.org/chemistry

Feb. 23 • 3 AM
on the North Liberty Campus



MAR 1 Foster Care Pool Party

Grace families are invited to a pool party hosted by Extending Grace and Community Outreach ministries. Hangout with families hosting foster children and learn how Grace Community can support foster families. Please bring a dessert to share.

graceb3.org/fcparty

Mar. 1 • at 5:30-8 PM
at the North Liberty
Rec Center

29 Seasoned Sisters Leap Into Creation

Come join us at this Seasoned Sisters event as we "leap" for joy as we consider God's creation and all that His has made for us!

graceb3.org/sisters
Feb. 29 • Saturday 10 AM-12
PM on the North Liberty
Campus

MAR 6 Spring Fling Children's Ministry

Come for an hour of spring fun! We will have story time, a craft, activities and a take-home snack! For ages two years through Pre-K and their parents.

graceb3.org/fling
Mar. 6 • 11 AM
on the North Liberty Campus

25 Sons of the King Men's Ministry

Sons of the King is our Father/Son Discipleship series that we offer twice a year. This session we will be working through the Trailblazer curriculum.

graceb3.org/sok
Feb. 25 - Apr. 7 • Tuesdays
from 6:30-8 PM on the North
Liberty Campus

MAR 1 Daughters of the King

Moms, bring your daughters (1st-6th graders) to our spring session of Daughters of the King, a ministry that helps moms and daughters build better relationships with each other and Christ. It also builds fellowship with girls and other moms going through similar stages of life.

graceb3.org/dok
Sundays, Mar. 1-29
12:15-1:30 PM

MAR 13&14 Ignite Youth Conference Student Ministry

Ignite is a yearly multi-state Youth Conference for student leaders, volunteers, and youth workers. Yes, Ignite was designed with the whole youth ministry in mind.

graceb3.org/ignite
Mar. 13-14 • Depart on 13th at 4
PM and back on 14th at 7 PM,
Des Moines

Extending Grace Ministry

by Natasha Miller, Emily Isaacson & Krystal McFadden

Extending Grace is a ministry of Grace Community Church that reaches foster and adoptive families through tangible goods and services.

We want to say thank you to all who have donated clothing and time! God is growing Extending Grace and we are hearing wonderful things from the foster community. We trust that God will continue to grow the ministry in 2020.

Families write back...

“Thank you so very much for your kindness and thoughtfulness as we brought a baby boy home from the hospital. We can do what we do because of the generosity of groups like yourselves. The meals, clothes, emails and support have been so helpful.”

Foster Care Pool Party

March 1 @ 5:30 PM

at the North Liberty Rec Center

Grace families are invited to a pool party hosted by Extending Grace and Community Outreach ministries.

Hangout with families hosting foster children and learn how Grace Community can support foster families.

Please bring a dessert to share.

Register at graceb3.org/fcparty.



Extending Grace Highlights of 2019

GROCERY DELIVERY

42 Families who received grocery deliveries upon receiving a new placement (This is a new ministry arm from 2019.)

CHRISTMAS CHEER

25 Children who received Christmas gifts (for children who entered foster care between Thanksgiving and Christmas)

BACK TO SCHOOL

109 Children who received backpacks and school supplies

SUMMER FUN

49 Families who received a summer activity gift pack just in time for for summer break

POOL PARTIES

139 People who came to the Foster Care Pool Parties

FILLING THE CLOSET

131 Children who received shopping bags of clothing upon entering foster care

GIVEAWAY BOUNTY

263 People who came to our spring and fall giveaways in 2019, look out for them again in 2020

EMPOWERED TO CONNECT

43 People who attended Empowered to Connect - training for helping kids who have been through trauma



*for more information
graceb3.org/extendinggrace
or contact us at
extendinggrace@graceb3.org*

COVER FEATURE

PILOT GROUPS

A Pilot Community Group is a journey devoted to learning the fundamentals of Community Group life. Community Groups are a core part of who we are as a church. This group will be a great way for you to join into group life at Grace Community.



What do you go over in Pilot Groups every week?

Every week we incorporate aspects of four discipleship areas into group time: prayer, scripture reading, community building, and missional focus. Each week someone at each table will share their story and we'll go through a passage of scripture and learn to ask good questions about the text that help us to interpret it well and missionally apply it. Groups also pray for one another, eat together, and spend time just getting to know individuals in their group.



Snapshots from our Fall 2019 Pilot Groups

What happens after the eight weeks are over?

Our goal is that each table launches out into a community group of their own after the class is over. Every group decides if they are committed to continuing to meet outside of the 'Pilot Groups' banner. This will involve figuring out future roles within the group such as discussion leaders, hosts, and organizers. Our pastors that have been leading you through Pilot Groups help to call out those roles and help with other unseen issues in launching a group.

How do I know if Pilot Groups is a good fit for me?

Pilot Groups are designed to welcome people that are at many different points in their spiritual journey. Curiosity about faith is all that's needed. Never been in a community group? It can be a little nerve-wracking, but Pilot Groups are a safe place to try a community group for the first time. Whether you're exploring faith, Grace, or groups, Pilot Groups will be a good starting place for you.

Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all
circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

SERMON FORECAST

1 Thessalonians

BY PASTOR JASON BLACKLEY



You don't have to attend this church very long before you hear the word "gospel". In the larger evangelical world, you can find products, writing, and books that are touted as being "gospel-centered." Often, what this means is that something is centered on the substitutionary death of Christ on our behalf. This is the pivotal moment in Christianity, world history, and in our lives. But, it is really just the threshold of the doorway to what God has for us. When we hear the word "gospel", we need to think about not only the death of Christ but his resurrection, ascension, lordship, kingdom and indwelling Spirit. Due to each of these, the substitutionary death of Christ on our behalf gives us access to the kingdom of God, but this is really just the beginning. His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension inaugurated the kingdom of God on Earth. He not only invites us in, but also gives us access through the blood of Christ and invites us into a new kind of life. New values. New paradigm. New rules. New life!

In late January we began a series through the book of 1 Thessalonians that we will continue through the Spring. In this book, the substitutionary atonement of Christ is assumed and not explicitly laid out for us in the same way it is in books like Romans, Ephesians, and Galatians. Paul wants the church in Thessalonica to not only know the good news, and look forward to heaven, but to live

for God's kingdom, as His "good news people" today. The gospel, which means "good news," is good news not only for your future destination after death, but is good news for you and the world around you today! In 1 Thessalonians, Paul gives us a timeless look at what God's good news people look like and what a gospel-filled, empowered, and motivated church looks like. He shows us what it looks like when the kingdom of God is brought to bear on the lives and practices of individuals, families, church body and our society. Nijay Gupta in his commentary on 1 Thessalonians states that our worldview is only as good as it can "accommodate and maintain its integrity in light of perplexities." This winter and spring we will see how the kingdom of God worldview prepares us for life and all of its perplexities.

Often, life seems so perplexing and complex that we feel like sanctification and living for God's kingdom is either too hard, not worth it, or downright impossible. Here's some good news for us as we move forward in 2020. Even when we blow it, don't understand, fail, suffer, sin, and struggle, "He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it!" (1 Thess. 5:24)

The gospel is good news not only for your future destination after death, but is good news for you and the world around you today!



Ryan McFadden

...

Facilities Director since
August 2, 2015

Married to...
Krystal McFadden
since January 28, 2012

with children...
Oliver (4), Declan (2)
and Zane (11 mo.)

INTERVIEWING RYAN

Catch Phrase:
“Rock on to the fullest”

What’s new with you?

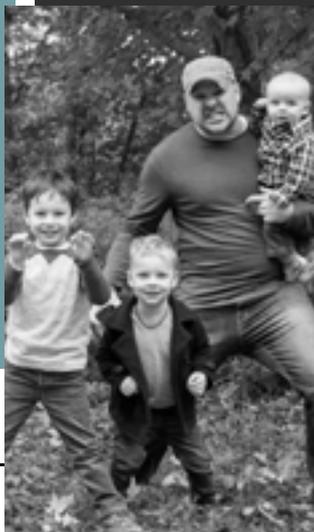
Personally, there are a few new items. In March 2019, my wife, Krystal, and I welcomed our third son, Zane, to the world. He is keeping up with his two older brothers with laughter and smiles. We went from one-on-one defense with our kids to zone defense.

Another new item for me is participating in two programs. The first program is participating in a Toastmasters chapter, which is a group to help individuals with their public speaking skills.

The second is going through a training program to become a Financial Coach. I would like to coach individuals on their financial journey regarding budgeting, paying off debts, and becoming debt-free!

How is your ministry on staff at Grace choosing to be missional?

In February 2019, we added more personnel to our Facility Team, both hired and volunteers. A majority of our volunteers are from the ages of 11-14. In June 2019, the Facility Team staff went on a retreat where we





Ryan & Krystal

discussed our mission statement, expectations, and tasks. Our mission statement is “Honoring God by serving efficiently as a cohesive team”, and 1 Peter 4:10 is the verse that our mission statement is built upon. Every week, our Facility Team will start with a devotion and recite a memory verse. We took on the challenge of memorizing Proverbs 5, and we are currently reading through Psalm 119.

What’s something you’d like everyone to know?

Even with all my various responsibilities

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.

- 1 Peter 4:10

and roles at Grace, the job truly cannot be done without the servants that step up to give their time and talent to the Lord. Each one of us has a gift and talent to share among the congregation. Sometimes it is keeping a watchful eye during church services. Sometimes, it is lending a hand to reset chairs in the auditorium after an event. Sometimes it is being compassionate and serving during a

time of grieving. Sometimes it means making a decision to help create a facility to help further the gospel. To all of those who I’ve had the opportunity to serve alongside and get to know, thank you for your service and friendships.

If you are not involved or looking for a spot to serve, please do not be shy or think someone else will take care of it. God wants to use you.

Downtown Talent

Jon Abdo



The Abdo Family

Jon has been passionate about finances and stewarding them biblically since he was pretty young. In the first grade he started his first paper route, and his parents instilled give, save, and spend principles with every and every dollar that the boys earned.

As he got older, the principles stuck as he graduated to mowing lawns and shoveling driveways through junior

high and high school and now works in the financial field as a Commercial Insurance Underwriter at United Fire Group (UFG) Insurance in Cedar Rapids.

Jon is a member of Grace and attends the Downtown Campus where he serves on the worship team, co-leads a community group with Justin and Hannah Bonzato, and is part of the set-up and tear-down crew.

From left to right: Josh, Caleb, Michael, Katelyn (sister-in-law), Steven, Shirley, Joe and finally Jon.

You're not seeing double. Josh and Jon are twins. The Abdo family has been coming to Grace for about nine years and they all attend the Downtown Campus, except for Michael who is out of state serving at a very young church.

When asked why he chose to stay at Grace, Jon said that he decided to stay in Iowa City for college in part because of Grace's plans to launch the Downtown Campus and he really wanted to be part of the new Downtown Campus.

"I love that scripture is clearly taught at Grace. Our pastors are humble and have personally cared for me deeply and sincerely. I

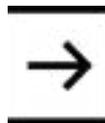
am so grateful for the close community I've formed through Grace."

In addition to all he does with and for Grace Downtown and his full-time job, Jon likes spending time engaging in almost any sport. His favorite is soccer. He also took up disc golf this past summer just to get outside and spend time with friends. He might also be a bit competitive.

His mom claims that he's never lost at family board game night, but Jon thinks this might be a bit of an exaggeration. He also enjoys traveling and has twice had the opportunity to visit Colombia. He's also toured several European countries on a different occasion, and hopes to tick off more continents from his bucket list in the future.



If you're hoping to serve, but Sunday mornings don't work well, there's always Sunday nights! Our Downtown Campus could always do with more helping hands on our set-up and tear-down crews. As you can imagine doing a pop-up church weekly takes many hands to make the work light. [email downtown@graceb3.org](mailto:downtown@graceb3.org)



Treasure Talent

written by Caleb Stamp, our Business Administration Director

It's February, which means we're neck-deep in budget prep at Grace. I could go on and on about the detailed process we follow for budgeting and my love/hate relationship with Google Sheets. I could also rat out which staff members don't know what a "=SUM" formula does. Instead though, I thought we could back up and share a bit about what a church budget is and why it matters.

I recently read *Budgeting for a Healthy Church* and the author, Jamie Dunlop, puts it very well when he says, "God's goal for your church budget is that through your faithfulness He will get the glory." He lays that point out this way: "As people give money to the church, their faithfulness as individuals proclaims God as better than their desire to get."

As the church invests that money in God's work, the church deliberates about which investments best aligns with the values God gives us in Scripture, often making investments the world says are foolhardy, once again this shows how good and trustworthy God is.

As God chooses to bless those investments, He shows Himself to be a God of power, of mercy, and a God who keeps His promises.

That begs the question: Faithful to do what? Grace Community Church has been called to be faithful in being and making disciples who make disciples. That is our mission, i.e. The Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). Everything in our budget should point to that mission.

That means the church budget is way more than just a tool for making sure we don't spend too much. It's a roadmap for when/where/how we plan to reach out to our community, corridor, and world with the gospel. It's also a prayer guide we can use by picking a line-item and asking God to accomplish the gospel-ambitions that stand behind that money. If that doesn't get you excited about budgets, then I don't know what will!

Check out next month's Insider for more information on our Annual Business Meeting on March 22 where you can learn more about the budget, get a copy for yourself, and hear more about what's happening from the Financial Review Committee.

Profit & Loss

Apr 01, 2019 through Dec 31, 2019

Accrual Basis



HOME STRETCH FOR FISCAL YEAR 2019-2020

Here we see an uptick in giving for December, which is par for the course and happens every year because lots of folks do special year-end giving in December.

“For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.” - 2 Corinthians 8:12

If you scroll your eyes down to the bottom line, you’ll see the total expenses row. Back in 2018 we budgeted for a One Fund goal over two years, which breaks down to about 3.14M in one year. Right now, if our current annual trend continues, we’re going to come in about 300K below that goal, which means something will have to give, because overspending isn’t an option.

REVENUE AND EXPENSE BY DEPARTMENT

Revenue Category	Budgeted Revenue	Actual Revenue
One Fund Revenue	\$ 2,850,620	\$ 1,963,977
Restricted Use Offering Revenue	144,460	71,333
Other Revenue	59,925	36,669
Total Revenue	\$ 3,055,005	\$ 2,071,979

Departments	Budgeted Expenses	Actual Expenses
Payroll	\$ 1,349,789	\$ 1,009,308
Proclamation	33,210	23,478
Community	94,115	60,489
Ministry	126,900	85,113
Operational Development	715,998	415,956
Saving for Estimated Mortgage Payments	820,923	477,635
Total Expenses	\$ 3,140,935	\$ 2,071,979

Focus on Prayer

by Pastor Brooks Simpson

I like questions. They make me think. Let's start this prayer focus by asking some thought-worthy questions.

- How do you view your problems?
- How do you view 'problem people'?
- How do you view perceived blessings – health, wealth, success?
- How do you view people who don't share or who dislike your faith?
- How do you view the community?
- How do you view the rest of the world that lacks access to the gospel?

The end of January kicked off our sermon series on Paul's first letter to the church in Thessalonica. Right out of the gate Paul tells the Thessalonians they are

We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thess. 1:2-3

constantly mentioning the Thessalonians in their prayers.

Later he admonishes them to pray without ceasing in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

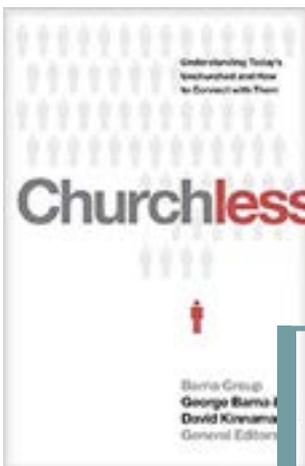
As this new year has barely begun I would like us to consider something. What if the people of Grace

Community Church (you and I) were characterized by always remembering one another in prayer and praying without ceasing? What might change in your life? (Revisit the questions asked earlier.)

If we were a people that prayed without ceasing and always remembered one another in prayer, would the answers to those questions change? I believe they would. Prayer changes things and prayer changes the people who pray.

Recently our Executive Pastor Paul Hansen pointed out an interesting quote to me from a book called *Churchless* by George Barna...

“
For three decades Barna Group has studied the impact and characteristics of effective churches. One of the most consistent patterns we have observed is a commitment to prayer by the senior pastor, the leadership team and staff, the lay leaders, and, of course, the people in the pews. When we compare thriving churches with those that are struggling, we see that a top-to-bottom commitment to prayer so often makes the difference.
”



Is anyone surprised by this? God is changing us. We see evidence of prayer becoming much more than lip service. We aspire to be a church that prays without ceasing. During our last sermon series you probably noticed we are making room for more corporate prayer time. Expect that to become common. We have Sunday morning corporate prayer at three separate times: 7, 8 AM (in room 307) and 9:30 AM (in loft 201).

It's no secret that prayer is essential and the one thing all believers can do. Strangely though a church that truly prays without ceasing is rare indeed. How could that be? I believe there is a correlation between brokenness and prayer. A broken people is a praying people. I found a prayer in the cover of an old book of Puritan prayers called *The Valley of Vision* (it's printed on page 22). I had not read it before the Brokenness series in January; I wish I would have. Make it your prayer today for yourself and for your church.

Lord, may 2020 be the year that we become a prayer dependent and prayer driven people.
Amen.

a prayer from
The Valley of Vision

*Lord, high and holy, meek and lowly,
Thou has brought me to the valley of vision,
where I live in the depths
but see thee in the heights;
hemmed in by mountains of
sin I behold Thy glory.*

*Let me learn by paradox
that the way down is the way up,
that to be low is to be high,
that the broken heart is the healed heart,
that the contrite spirit is the rejoicing spirit,
that the repenting soul is the victorious soul,
that to have nothing is to possess all,
that to bear the cross is to wear the crown,
that to give is to receive,
that the valley is the place of vision.*

*Lord, in the daytime stars can be seen from
deepest wells,
deepest wells,
and the deeper the wells the brighter
Thy stars shine;*

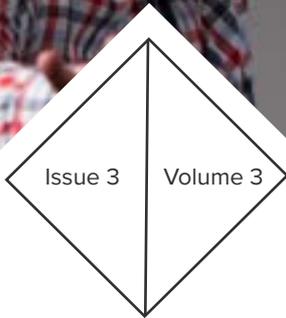
*Let me find Thy light in my darkness,
Thy life in my death,
Thy joy in my sorrow,
Thy grace in my sin,
Thy riches in my poverty
Thy glory in my valley.*

SERMON NOTES

Feb 2 - 1 Thess. 1:6-10

Feb 9 & 16 - 1 Thess. 2:1-10

Feb 23 - 1 Thess. 2:11-12



COMING UP IN MARCH

Dan Bovenmyer

Our ninja-style
Community Groups
Pastor will be
updating us on his
work of putting the
community in Grace
Community Church!

Olivia Merriweather

Our Field Staffer in
southern Asia will
update us on what's
going on since she's
returned from
Christmas in the states
to her mission field.

Megan Lehman

Featuring our talented
Guatemala short-term
mission trip vet, we're
excited to see what
she's looking forward
to in 2020.

Grace Community Church
graceb3.org | graceb3.org/app | 319.626.2040
2707 Dubuque St. NE, North Liberty | services at 8, 9:30 & 11 AM
Old Brick Church 26 E Market St, Iowa City | service at 5 PM