

WHAT DOES PERSONAL WORSHIP MEAN?

ADVENT PREVIEW

MISSIONS EMPHASIS RECAP

STUDENT MINISTRY UPDATE

CONFERENCE PREVIEW



GRACE INSIDER
NOVEMBER 2022

UPCOMING EVENTS

Learn more and/or sign up for events at graceb3.org/events

**FALL SERIES
COMPANION
BIBLE STUDY** It's not too late! Pick up a study guide, grab a notebook, roll up your sleeves, and let's get into the word. Our church-wide 16-week study takes you verse-by-verse through the fall sermon series on 1 Peter.
Series began September 4 and will continue until January 8.

**INTERNATIONAL
STUDENT
THANKSGIVING** Bless international students and spark conversation with them about why people give thanks to God even in the midst of suffering. Details on page 15.
*November 12
5 – 8:30pm*

**WOMEN'S CHRISTMAS
EVENT** Gather with women of all different life stages to enjoy fellowship and biblical encouragement before the busy Christmas season.
*December 2
6:30 – 8pm*

**PARENT ROUND
TABLE SERIES** Next Gen is hosting new quarterly parenting meetings to help and encourage parents as they disciple their children.
*December 11
9 – 10am*

support & encouragement
in discipling your kids

PARENTS ROUND TABLE*

DEC 11

SERIES

10:15 AM



Parents, you've heard us say that "*Grace partners with you to disciple your kids.*" What does it mean for you to disciple your kids? What might it look like?

Come get encouraged and equipped to make disciples of the next generation in your own household! We are in this together!

Questions? Contact Cindy at cindys@graceb3.org

**no registration required*



Missions Emphasis Week "Missions where do I fit in?" took place October 9–15. We pray that many of you have found the answer to that question! As the saying goes, it is now "in the rearview mirror." In the midst of all the missional challenges received and commitments made, however, we might get lost and forget *why* we committed to the challenges in the first place. What is the antidote to that?

Most drivers in North America are all too familiar with the engraved warning "objects in mirror are closer than they appear" on the side mirrors of their automobiles. The rationale of the warning is that the convex mirror, while increasing the area of vision, also makes an object seem farther away than it is. When something seems farther away, it can cause us to act in a way that might prove hazardous, so a reminder of something's proximity is helpful. Life as a whole is often like that. Our circumstances and situations tempt us to believe God's love for us is much farther away

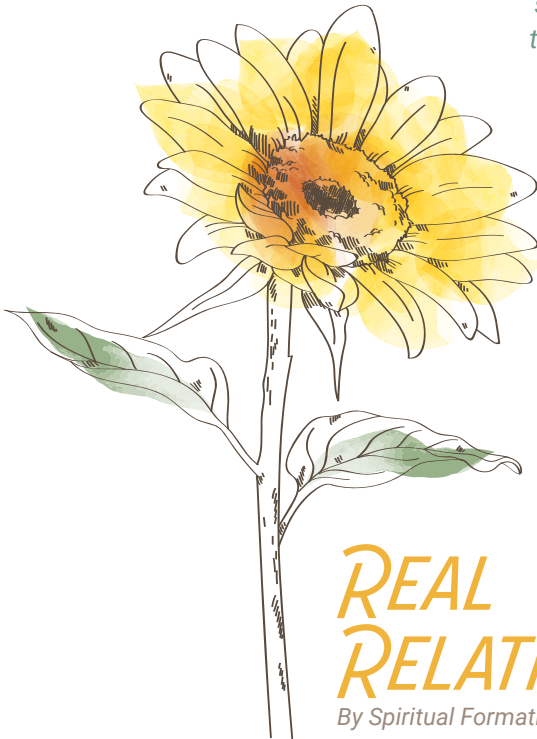


than it is. If we don't have reminders of the nearness of his love, we can fail to act on missional commitments we've made.

While engraved warnings can help in matters on the highways, they can't do much for our hearts. We are a sadly forgetful people. The writer of Psalm 136 takes pains to remind us that God's love is quite near us today. He declares that the Lord's "steadfast love endures forever." In 26 verses, he reminds us of this fundamental truth 26 times! The Hebraic term *steadfast* carries the idea of being immovable and not subject to change. In a world that changes frequently, we desperately need something that doesn't, something that is constant and remains the same. That "thing" is God's love for each of us. The whole chapter expounds on God's unchanging love. In this context, we are reminded of the implications. His love is a good love that is, above all, a safe place. That love is mighty, is infinitely wise, works on our behalf, performs wonders, routes our

enemies, provides for us, remembers us in our low estate, and rescues us from our foes. That is a pretty powerful love!

May I encourage you to pick one or two of these descriptions of God's love that minister to your soul and write them down someplace you will see them? Perhaps you may write, "God's love is mighty and works on my behalf." As you are encouraged, we challenge you to share that specific encouragement with someone else – ask God to give you one person to communicate that aspect of his immovable love to in the next day or two. That way, this reminder refreshes your soul and the heart of another person. After all, we all need reminders that God's love is (much) closer than it appears! And while Missions Emphasis Week is in the rearview mirror, as we move into the holidays, let's keep that mission going through his great love. His love is where we can find the motivation to help us cross the street, cross cultures, and cross boundaries with the mission entrusted to us. Let's GO, Church! 🌿



*"You shall love the Lord your God
with all your heart, with all your
soul and with all your mind, this is
the great and first commandment.
And a second is like it: You shall
love your neighbor as yourself."
Matthew 22:37-39*

*"Let love be genuine. Abhor
what is evil; hold fast to what
is good. Love one another with
brotherly affection. Outdo one
another in showing honor."
Romans 12:9-10*

REAL RELATIONSHIPS

By Spiritual Formation Pastor Dave Kirk

The verses above speak to something common to all of us – relationships. At the heart of these verses is the love which Christ has demonstrated for us with his life, death, and resurrection. Yet, relationships are hard. They are tainted by our sinful nature and sin's impact on the whole world. I am convinced this is one of the primary ways Satan seeks to kill and destroy us, through strangling our relationship with God and corrupting our relationships with others. The most beautiful things that the Lord creates and orders are the things that Satan attacks most. Relationships are surely one of the most precious things we have been given. He made each of us for relationships!

Our heart at Grace is to love God with all we have, and

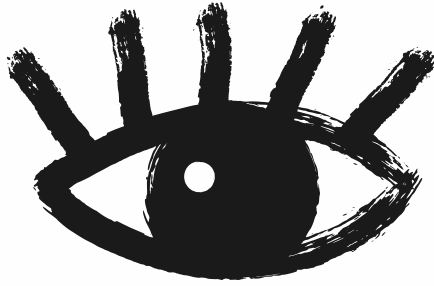
to love each other with his love. In living out this love we also fulfill the Great Commission, making disciples all along the way which results in a great impact for Christ in our community and the world. This year we've focused on growing into our calling to be people of God's word, sharing his love through B.L.E.S.S.ing one another and our community.

The weekend of February 3-4, 2023, Grace will host a conference on relationships entitled *Real Relationships: Loving Others with Christ's Love*. The conference will feature three main sessions focusing on God's design for relationships and how he redeems difficult ones. Breakout sessions will address a variety of relational dynamics including sessions on parenting, singleness, marriage, workplace relationships, friendship development, relationship reconciliation, love for enemies, and more. Our goal is that you'll walk away with practical tools to truly speak and act in the love of Christ. There will also be times to fellowship with snack breaks and lunch on Saturday.

Mark your calendars now and make plans to attend. Registration will be open in early December at graceb3.org/events. Meanwhile, please pray for the conference, teachers, and the attendees.

May our community know the people of our church for loving well. May we reflect God in our friendships, families, marriages, homes, workplaces, and neighborhoods. May that love flow from the joy we have in our relationship with Christ. 🌿

We're in the early stages of planning the conference, so if you are gifted in hospitality and event planning, please contact me at davek@graceb3.org.



ADVENT PREVIEW

By Executive Pastor Josh Haveman

Advent takes place during the four weeks preceding Christmas as we symbolically wait for the incarnation — God becoming man. We look forward to the birth of Jesus, actively anticipating the arrival of the world's savior.

In a typical Advent season at Grace Community Church, we might publish a devotional that focuses on what it means that God became man or plan a sermon series that explains how prophecy prepares us for Christ's birth. But this year we are continuing our study in 1 Peter. There is no special sermon series or devotional planned. Instead, this year we want to point you to the impact of the incarnation that you can see in 1 Peter. We want to direct your attention to what has happened because Jesus was born.

"He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed." 1 Peter 2:24

Jesus was born with a physical body which he used to save us. 1 Peter encourages us that **Christ's death means we can "die to sin and live to righteousness."** Without him, this is impossible. Because of him, we can have healing now, and life everlasting once he returns. Because Jesus was born, we can live.

"Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God." 1 Peter 4:1-2

Not only does his death, burial, and resurrection bring us life, but following the pattern of Christ's life also leads us closer to God. Peter tells us that the suffering in the flesh which Jesus experienced teaches us how to stop living for human passions and start living according to God's will. Peter describes this process in terms of self-sacrifice and suffering. This might be a hard lesson to learn, but it is a good reminder. Christ saves us, but he didn't come to the earth in a body so that we can have bodily comfort; he came to show us how suffering bodily is part of turning away from sin and fully embracing God's will.

This Advent season, **ask the Lord to open your eyes to see what the coming of Christ in the flesh means for your life today.** Pray that he would show you how bodily suffering can lead to understanding Christ better and serving him more completely. Finally, if you have been spiritually healed by Christ, submit both your spiritual and physical sufferings to him. He wants to heal you. And he wants to use your healing to bring others to himself. 🌿



By Student Ministry Director Brian Hagedorn

"Grace Student Ministry strives to be a place where every 7th–12th grade student is loved, known and accepted, taught about Jesus, and challenged to grow."

That's our mission and our prayer for each student who we get to build a relationship with. We often recite this statement at leadership meetings and Wednesday night gatherings as a way to help us remember the purpose that we want to saturate everything we do.

With the fast-paced schedule that the student ministry and our students often keep, it can be easy to get swept up in the chaos and neglect to slow down and reflect on what God has been doing. For that purpose, here is

a recap of how God has been working in the ministry:

SUMMER STUDY

This summer we hosted a study for students based on *The New City Catechism* devotional.

We walked through essential doctrines of the faith, where they're found in scripture, and why they are important. Students memorized these truths not just for the sake of being able to answer a set of questions, but to realize that hiding God's word in their hearts impacts how they live. They also learned how to respond to situations they encounter in life with the truths of God's promises, character, and actions. Just like the psalmist declared in

Psalm 119:11 when he said, *"I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you."* So each week we memorized the questions and answers (and had some fun memory competitions along the way) as we discussed how they might apply the truths to various circumstances they were facing or would likely face in the future.

ADVENTURELAND

Forty-nine people took our annual trip to Adventureland in Des Moines. It was **filled with fun, laughter, and relationship building**. This trip has always been a great way for leaders and students to get to know others they don't interact with as much on a typical Wednesday evening or Sunday morning, and that was certainly the case this year. Shared experiences like this are always a catalyst for the conversations that happen at Refill, in Life Groups, and on Sunday mornings.

PARK HANGOUT

On a beautiful Friday night in July, we invited students and leaders to Penn Meadows Park to hang out, play games, and **enjoy**

spending time with their friends and leaders. We had a great turnout and even had a handful of students join us who just happened to be passing through the park. It was a great way for our students to see peers from their schools and invite and welcome them into the group.

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

This fall we're excited to provide **opportunities for students and leaders to serve together**. Throughout September our Life Groups took turns going to the Houses Into Homes warehouse to serve families in need in our community. We sorted and built furniture and various household items that will be delivered to families. Over the course of September, over 75% of our regularly attending students were able to serve at Houses Into Homes. We even had several parents who agreed to help and serve alongside their students to impact their community!

FALL THRIVE

Our fall Thrive class has been exploring characteristics which mark those who have placed their faith in Christ. We have

discussed how disciples of Jesus are marked by devotion and commitment to the Bible, prayer, and community. We have also had conversations around how to put our trust in God's character, promises, and actions over our own understanding and circumstances, how we should be humble and quick to repent, and how we should have an eternal perspective... to name a few. It has been amazing to hear from a variety of teachers who have shared and led discussions, and **the students have done a great job participating and sharing their thoughts and questions.**

WEEKLY GATHERING

On August 17 we kicked off our semester by welcoming new seventh graders and forming new Life Groups. More than **100 students have consistently gathered weekly to play games, worship through songs, study the Bible, and pray for one another in their Life Groups.** God has been doing some amazing things in our students and leaders. It's been fun to watch our team of volunteers and students lead us in worship and to see more students join the worship team almost every week!

On top of that, we have a great group of students who faithfully greet their fellow students as they arrive each Wednesday. These students meet ahead of Refill to plan games and activities to welcome everyone, whether it's someone's first time or their hundredth time!

STUDENT LEADERSHIP

We strongly desire student involvement in leadership and believe it is a critical part of our students' growth in Christ. In addition to the students who serve on the worship and hospitality teams, several students meet monthly to plan our large group games and have even been in charge of leading the games for a night. We pray that these students will be excited about the gifts God has given them and use their gifts to lead in student ministry and the larger body of Christ!

1 PETER STUDY

This semester we have been **studying 1 Peter along with the church.** We encourage students to complete the weekly study before coming to Refill. Then on Wednesday nights we review the scripture together, work through

sections that were difficult to understand, and discuss how each of us plan to apply what we have learned. It has been great to hear from students who have completed the weekly study and their stories of how they discuss different questions with their parents or as a family.



WAYS TO PRAY FOR GSM

As you consider what has been going on within Grace Student Ministry, will you please pray with us?

- **Join us in praising God for the work he has been doing through the various gatherings and activities.** He has shown students his love by affirming they're known and accepted, by teaching them about his son, and by challenging them to grow.

- **Pray for the Student Ministry staff and leaders** that before all other things we would be faithful disciples of Christ and that we would model humble submission to the Lord both to the students and also to each other.

- Pray that God would continue to **raise up faithful men and women who love the Lord and desire**

to love and disciple the next generation. Also, please **ask the Lord whether he is calling you** to become a part of the student ministry team through discipling, serving, and using your gifts. I would love to talk with you about it!

- **Pray for the students** that they would pursue the Lord above all else and diligently spend time in his word, in prayer, and involved in community and the church. Pray that they would boldly proclaim the gospel to their friends at school and cling to Christ when the pressures of life are overwhelming.

- **Pray for the parents and families** to be built up and strengthened in Jesus and that their homes would be a place of hope, encouragement, and training in righteousness. 🌿

International Student Thanksgiving

Reach the Nations from Your Home

1 Share a meal with an international student.

2 Hear Brooks share the history of Thanksgiving, its current cultural meaning, and why people choose to give thanks to God amidst suffering.

3 Chat about Brooks' message over dessert.

Learn more at graceb3.org/event





Editor's Note: This is part 5 of our series discussing the worship of God. If you haven't read the previous articles yet, I suggest you give them a look. They can be found online at graceb3.org/insider

When Christians use the word *worship* we usually mean corporate worship – the worship of a gathered church. We think of singing, primarily. In this series we've discussed what worship is (and isn't) – and by now we know worshipping God is much more than just singing. One aspect of the modern church that we struggle with is personal worship. Labeling things and creating dichotomies can be dangerous, so let me clarify.

Corporate worship: what we do when we gather each week. It involves singing together, but it also involves much more. We'll consider that in later articles.

Personal worship: what happens day in and day out. It constitutes every moment that isn't corporate worship – the whole of our lives. This is the primary way the New Testament authors talk about worship, though the Old

Testament also has much to teach us on the subject. The apostles constantly use worship language in discussing the practical outworking of our faith. Let's look at two passages below.

ROMANS 12

The book of Romans is the most comprehensive account of the gospel in scripture. Chapters 1–11 are an astounding treatise on what God has done for us in Christ. Chapters 12–15 unpack some implications of the gospel for our lives. This pattern is similar to Paul's other letters, but what is unique here is that after his lengthy explanation of God's grace, Paul explicitly frames the entirety of the Christian life as worship. First, when he gets to the end of Chapter 11, he bursts out in a short song of praise. After all he has just expounded, he can't contain himself! Then, in Chapter 12, he states that our response to the gospel should be to *"present [our] bodies as a living sacrifice, which is your spiritual worship"* (**worship can also be translated as service** — this is important). Paul then shows us what that looks like — read Romans 12 and notice how Paul flows from the imagery of offering ourselves as a sacrifice to outlining the practical ways it plays out in relationships.

- **Humility** is worship.
- **Serving others with our spiritual gifts** is worship.
- **Being patient in tribulation** is worship.
- **Being generous to those in need** is worship.
- **Living peaceably with others** is worship.

Right now you may be thinking, "if Jesus offered the final atoning sacrifice for our salvation, wouldn't it be unnecessary for us to offer our own sacrifice? Hasn't he accomplished everything for us?" Yes, he has! Paul isn't saying that we have to live sacrificial lives so that we can

atone for our sin. He's telling us to offer sacrifices of praise, thanksgiving, and service — this is our joyful, humble response to the immeasurable grace we have already received.

COLOSSIANS 3

Colossians 3:17 says, *"And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."*

This verse caps a section on how our identity in Christ leads to character formation empowered by the Spirit and lived out in community. In the first part of Chapter 3, Paul identifies sins that we should put to death since we have new life in Christ. Then he transitions to the characteristics that we should abide in. And, each of them are concerned with living in day-to-day community — compassion, kindness, humility, patience, forgiveness. These are all attitudes, and acts, of personal worship. Then Paul places this in the context of corporate worship, telling us to "sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" together.

Because our life is hidden with Jesus (v. 3), and because we are chosen, holy, and beloved (v. 12), we do everything in the name of Jesus to the glory of God. That is the Christian life. We glorify God by reflecting Jesus' image to the world in all that we do, and in that, we proclaim his infinite worth every day of our lives. 🌿

SERMON NOTES		DATE:
MAIN IDEA:	NOTES:	

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recruiting volunteers *for* special needs ministry

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