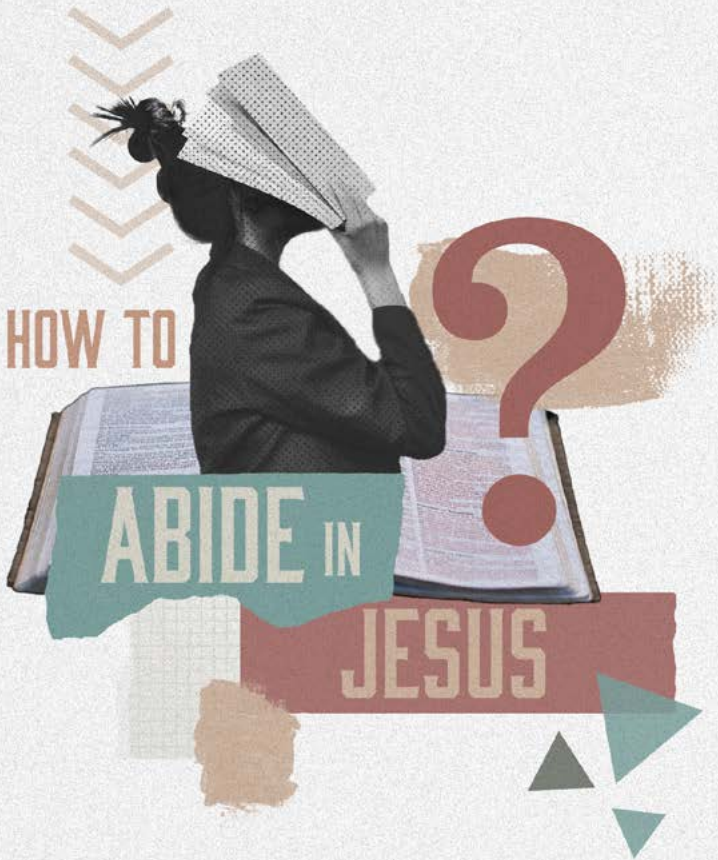


GRACE INSIDER  
FEBRUARY 2023



HOW TO MINISTER TO ONE  
ANOTHER

PRACTICAL WAYS TO  
REACH OTHERS

FOCUSED GIVING UPDATES

# UPCOMING EVENTS

*Learn more and/or sign up for events at [graceb3.org/events](https://graceb3.org/events)*

## **REAL RELATIONSHIPS CONFERENCE** *February 3–4*

Come learn how to be intentional in loving those around you with Christ's love as we seek to B.L.E.S.S. those we are in relationship with. This conference will address why God made us for relationship, how God designed those relationships, and how he can redeem relationships that are broken. Childcare provided for 2 & under.

## **MEMBERSHIP CLASS** *February 12 10:15–11:30AM*

If you consider Grace your home church, this class is for you. Learn how you can join us on our mission to glorify God by being and making disciples who make disciples.

## **BAPTISM CLASS** *February 19 & 26 8:30–9:30AM*

Our baptism class covers the whys, whens and hows of baptism at Grace. 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! Class is mandatory to be baptized at Grace.

## **BIBLICAL SOUL CARE: WEEKEND EDITION** *February 25 8AM–4:30PM*

This class is for everyone who has ever wondered how to help someone who is hurting, losing hope, or struggling with deep set sin (and it's for everyone that has been there too). Our stance is that everyone gives counsel (or what we more frequently call advice) and that as Jesus' people we are called to give biblical answers to life's questions and problems. This class will get you off to a roaring start on what a biblical answer is to some of the sticky things that life throws our way.

# CONNECT WITH US

**DOWNLOAD** the "Graceb3" app and enable push notifications.

**GET THE NEXT INSIDER** sent to your inbox at [graceb3.org/insider](https://graceb3.org/insider)



REGISTER AT [GRACEB3.ORG/EVENTS](https://graceb3.org/events)

# BIBLICAL SOUL CARE

**WEEKEND EDITION**

2.25 • 3.25 • 4.22 | 8AM - 4:30PM

Free to attend\*

*\* Bring your own lunch or pay \$35 to have lunch catered on the three meetings dates.*

This class is for everyone who has ever wondered how to help someone who is hurting, losing hope, or struggling with deep set sin (and it's for everyone that has been there, too). Our stance is that everyone gives counsel (or what we more frequently call advice) and that as Jesus' people we are called to give biblical answers to life's questions and problems. This class will get you off to a roaring start on what a biblical answer is to some of the sticky things that life throws our way.





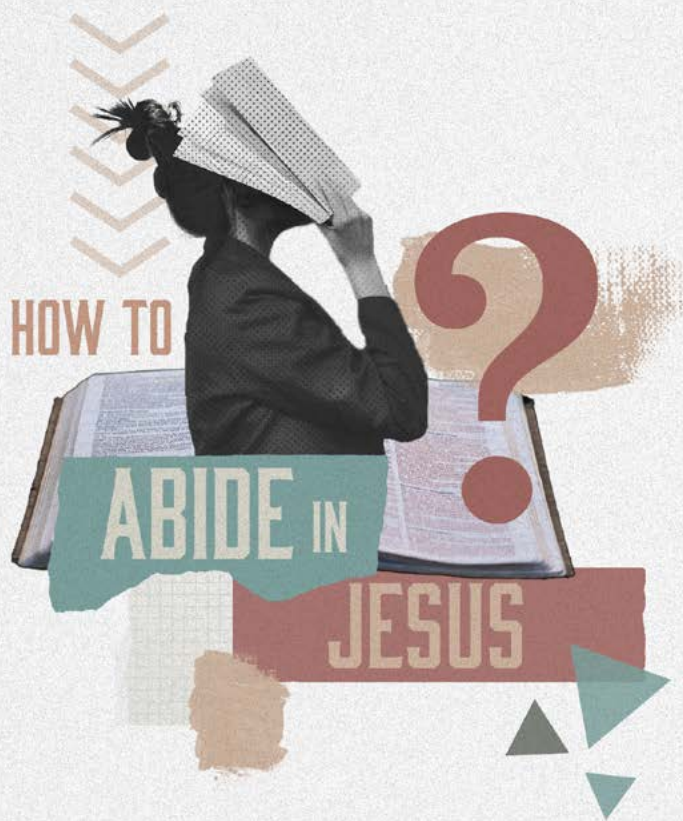
# *Pray* for the **Guatemala Missions Trip**

*By February 2023 Guatemala Missions Team*

**T**his month, a team of nine from Grace will take a short-term trip to Guatemala where they'll work alongside Bethel Ministries to distribute wheelchairs and walkers that they have been collecting all year. The team will also pour concrete floor and build metal homes for families. These homes typically include a fuel-efficient wood stove and triple bunk beds. In addition, they'll encourage families with the love of Christ and distribute food, clothes, and blankets during home visits throughout the week.

Here are specific ways you can be praying for the team:

- that God would prepare team members' hearts for service.
- that the team would be open to opportunities God presents on the trip.
- that God would provide the funds needed to complete projects.
- that the team's service will point people to Christ. 🌿



*By Lead Pastor Brooks Simpson*

*"If you abide in me, and  
my words abide in you,  
ask whatever you wish,  
and it will be done for you.  
By this my Father is glorified,  
that you bear much fruit and so  
prove to be my disciples."  
John 15:7-8 (ESV)*

**W**ould you characterize your life as joyful? Or are you stressed, anxious, angry, apathetic, bored, punctuated with a little joy here and there? Jesus came that his joy would be in you and that your joy would be complete. Who doesn't want complete joy? It's possible but the price of joy is abiding in Jesus.

**Abiding is the practice of doing activities that enable us to experience the presence and power of Jesus.** Whether you began following Jesus yesterday or began your journey decades ago, abiding requires **encountering Jesus daily through his word.** Some of you have a daily habit of engaging Jesus through his word and prayer. Keep it up! Some of you know you should; you want to be consistent but you always find yourself getting started, get busy or distracted and then stop.

It is strange that we can forget to feed our souls, but we never forget to feed our stomachs. You may at times find you are too busy to eat, but no one goes days or weeks on end forgetting to eat. No one gets to the end of a week and thinks, *"hey, wait a minute. I haven't eaten all week! How did that happen?"* Our stomachs protest after we go without food for too long. If only our souls would protest when we forget to feed on the word of God. How would you like to train your soul, in the power of the Spirit, to protest when it needs food? It's possible in the power of the Spirit. The Spirit won't do all the work, though; you will have to develop a new habit.

Turning a behavior into a habit takes consistent repetition. New habits form when we repeat the desired behavior every day for at least a month. We want to help you develop a consistent practice of drawing near to God, so we have developed **a daily devotion through the Gospel of Mark**. The devotional will last from **February 20 through April 7** on Good Friday. **This devotional coincides with Lent, the 40 days leading up to Easter.**

Each entry is **short and easy to engage**. Each morning's text message will consist of a Scripture reading from Mark, a short devotional, and a suggested action step. Each daily devotion will take the average reader approximately **four minutes**. We will cover the high points of Mark's gospel starting with the announcement of God's kingdom in the first chapter to the resurrection and great commission in the last. As you finish up your last devotion on Good Friday you will have spent 40 days walking through Mark as you prepare to celebrate Jesus' resurrection. **This devotional will also whet your appetite for a much deeper sermon series and corresponding Bible study on Mark's gospel beginning in the fall of 2023.**

Abide in Jesus and let his word abide in you. Get his word into your heart daily, and let his Spirit begin to change you from the inside out. You can **sign up to receive the daily devotion through your smartphone by texting "mark" to 94253**. Take your first step in allowing the Spirit to develop consistent joy that your soul will hunger for forever after. 🌿





# baptism class

Our two-part baptism class is for anyone who wants to learn about baptism and/or pursue being baptized at Grace.

This class is a requirement to be baptized at Grace.  
Register at [graceb3.org/baptism](http://graceb3.org/baptism) or on the app.

*Feb 19 & 26 8:30am*

*Baptism is an outward sign of  
an inward work of God in man.*



## Lenten Worship

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*By Worship Director Zack Stanton*

The season of Lent begins on February 22. This is a time leading up to Easter when Christians from many denominations and traditions prepare for Easter through intentional practices, such as fasting or giving to the poor. In the evangelical church, there is a wide variety of attitudes toward the season of Lent from, “Isn’t this a Catholic thing?” to “This is a beautiful time of reflection” to “Lent is something you pull off your clothes, right?”.

My first exposure to Lent as a kid was when I asked my parents what Mardi Gras was. The association of that kind of partying and excess to prepare for a season of giving things up left a bad

taste in my mouth — it felt terribly inauthentic. Many evangelicals similarly have negative connotations with Lent.

Maybe you come from a Catholic background, which could lead to a number of associations with Lent. Perhaps you valued it as a rich tradition and miss it in the evangelical church. Or maybe you found Lent to be hollow traditionalism that focused on guilt and abstinence or burdensome because it imposed rules but missed the gospel.

Maybe you have never even heard of Lent and wonder what this is all about!

Why observe Lent? I would like to offer some thoughts on how the season of Lent can be helpful as a time of focused worship.

**Lent is a time to intentionally meditate on the Lord Jesus with a growing anticipation for Easter.** The purpose of this season is twofold: 1) To develop a greater understanding of our need for Jesus, and 2) to develop a greater understanding of the grace of Jesus. The goal of Lent is singular: **to arrive at Easter with a renewed joy in what Jesus has done for us!**

How does worship fit into this? Worship is all-encompassing for Christians. It's not just what we do on Sundays, nor is it just listening to "worship music." The Bible says it is for all of life — every day, every activity (Rom. 12:1; 1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17). It is a demonstration with the whole of our lives that God is worthy of our devotion and adoration. With that in mind, let's consider how Lent can be a time of focused worship in two specific practices (though there are others!).

## WORSHIP THROUGH REPENTANCE

Lent ends the day before Good Friday, culminating with the crucifixion of Jesus. The horrible death that Jesus suffered on the cross is a vivid reminder of the heinousness of sin. We don't wallow in our sin during Lent — it's not a time for self-judgment and naval-gazing. But it is **a time for humble reflection**. If worship is declaring the worthiness of God with our lives, then repentance — turning from sin — is a remarkable act of worship. When we repent, we acknowledge that our sin is destructive, that it has separated us from God, and that we were made for holiness. When we first come to Christ to confess our sins and receive his forgiveness, that is not the last time we confess and repent. At the moment of our salvation, we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, but we are not made perfect. When we confess our sin, we humbly acknowledge our need for Jesus. The gospel assures us that when we confess, we are forgiven as loved children. If we love Jesus, our sin causes us sorrow and reminds us of our brokenness. **Lent can be a time to remember the consequences of our sin that Jesus bore**, and say with David in Psalm 139:23-24:

*Search me O God and know my heart!  
Try me and know my thoughts!  
And see if there be any grievous way in me,  
and lead me in the way everlasting.*

**The gospel doesn't really feel like good news if we don't understand the bad news of what our sin has done.** Take a moment to read Luke 7:36-50 and consider Jesus' words to Simon the Pharisee. Lent is a great opportunity to reflect on how much we have been forgiven!



## WORSHIP THROUGH FASTING

Can you think of a more neglected biblical practice than fasting? Oh, fasting happens these days, but is usually motivated by health benefits (nothing wrong with that!), not spiritual benefits. I know I don't like fasting! But we can fast from things other than food. We can give up things that take up our time, like social media, television shows, or hobbies. We don't give these things up so we can experience hardship, as if causing ourselves to suffer somehow makes us worthy of Jesus' sacrifice. **Denying ourselves the enjoyment of good things doesn't impress God in the least.** Isaiah 58 is the lengthiest passage on fasting in Scripture. Take a moment to read it in its entirety, but I'll share verses 6 and 7 here:

*Is not this the fast that I choose:  
to loose the bonds of wickedness,  
to undo the straps of the yoke,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
and to break every yoke?  
Is it not to share your bread with the hungry  
and bring the homeless poor into your house;  
when you see the naked, to cover him,  
and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?*

This is **fasting with purpose**. We fast to spend time serving others. We fast to give to someone in need. Fasting isn't a way to twist God's arm into doing something or to impress him with our ability to suffer. **It's a way to remember our need to hunger for God and to seek the welfare of those who are in need.** That demonstrates the worthiness of God — and that is worship.

## CONCLUSION

Clearly, these practices shouldn't be limited to Lent. Repentance should be daily. Fasting can be practiced any time. The season of Lent can be helpful, though, if we lean into it as a time to prepare for Easter. Lent should be a crescendo that climaxes at the resurrection, rejoicing in Jesus' work on our behalf, remembering that he entered our suffering to bear our sin, and that he left his heavenly throne to take on the form of a servant. It's a time to saturate ourselves in the gospel. It's a time to glory in Jesus. As with every other moment of our lives, it's a time to worship. 🌿

# Free Tax Preparation Services

**Feb 1 - Apr 13 (Mondays - Thursdays)  
8:30am - 4pm • Iowa City Senior Center**

Free tax preparation services will be offered by appointment at the Iowa City Senior Center (22 S Linn St) thru April. Low to moderate income taxpayers of any age, especially those age 50 and over, can receive this free service, provided by trained volunteers through a partnership with the AARP Foundation.

Counselors will be available by appointment on Mondays - Thursdays from 8:30am - 4pm.

Visit [icgov.org/senior](http://icgov.org/senior) or call (319) 356-5220 to learn more or schedule an intake appointment.

*AARP Foundation Tax-Aide provides in-person assistance to anyone, free of charge, with a special focus on taxpayers who are over 50 or have low to moderate income. Tax-Aide volunteers are located nationwide, and are trained and IRS-certified every year to make sure they know about and understand the latest changes and additions to the tax code.*



*By Austin Ward*

*Austin and Lauren serve as the Program Leads for Short-Term Missions and Deployment on the Global Outreach Taskforce.*

**W**hen you think of short-term missions, what comes to mind? Maybe it's a particular project, a person that you know that's been on a mission trip, or a specific place that you've heard of people going. While each of us may have a different picture that comes to mind, many of the ideas around short-term trips are the same. But why should we care about the nations in the first place?

The short answer is that God is worthy of all praise. Since the time of creation, God has rightfully desired to be glorified in all the earth. In Genesis 1, when God creates man and woman, he tells them to *"be fruitful and multiply and fill the*



*earth and subdue it.*" Later, God makes his covenant with Abraham that he might be blessed to be a blessing to the nations and restore people to himself. Fast forward all the way to 1 Peter 2:9-10 and we see our identity and purpose as followers of Christ:

*"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."*

**We are people who have been impacted to have an impact** or, like Abraham, blessed to be a blessing. We are invited into proclaiming the excellencies of him who has rescued us. It starts right in our own circles, sharing with our families, friends, and co-workers, but it doesn't stop there. In addition to John 3:16 sharing God's great love for the world, Scripture shares that God wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:4)

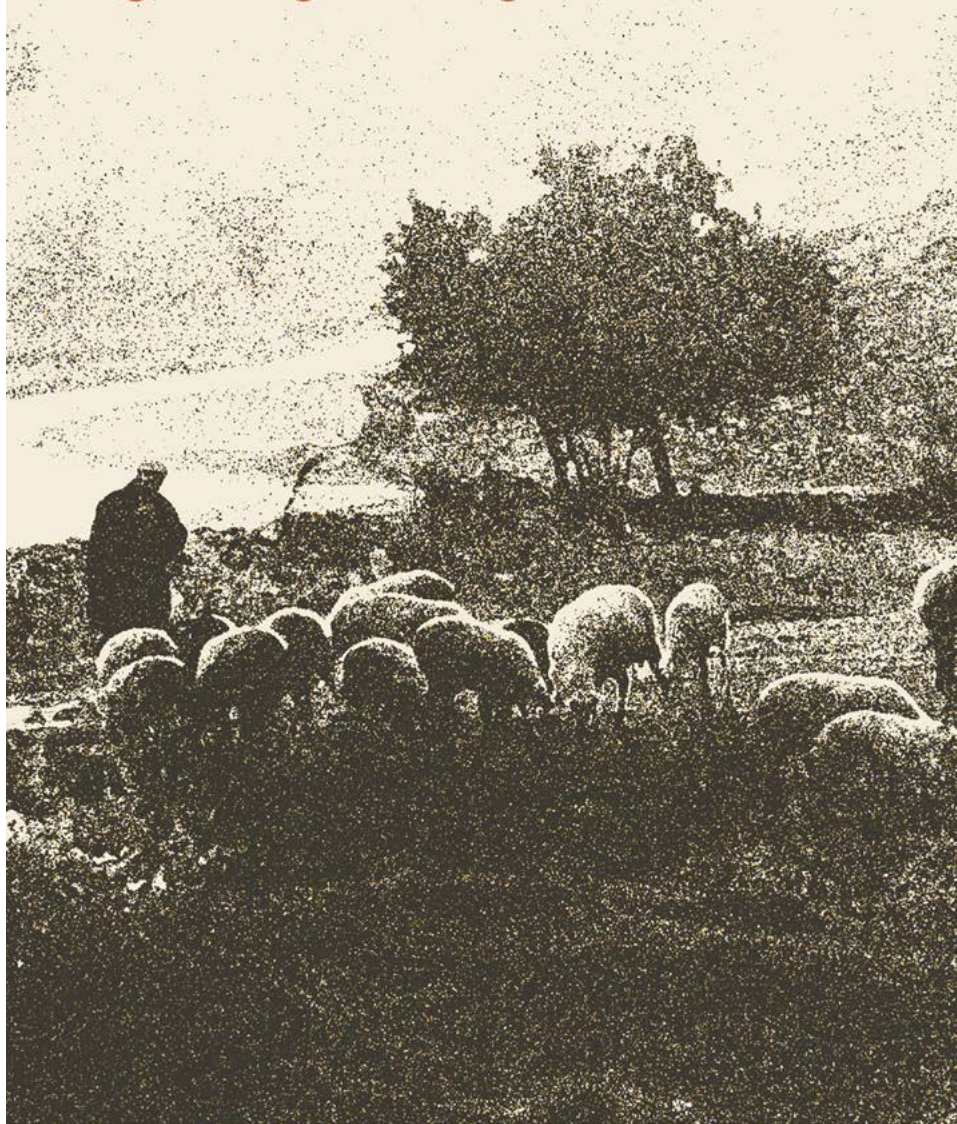
Seems like a pretty big task, right?

When Jesus sends out his disciples, he tells them that he will be with them, even to the end of the age. As twenty-first century disciples, that promise applies to us too! No matter where he leads us, he is with us and will help us to make disciples and spread God's glory throughout the earth. One of the most reassuring parts? We get to see how it ends! Habakkuk 2:14 says, *"For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea,"* and Revelation 7:9 states, *"After this I looked, and there*

# membership class

february 12 • 10:15–11:30am

register at [graceb3.org/events](http://graceb3.org/events)



*before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.” We’re invited into a task that we know will succeed!*

How do short-term trips play into the fulfillment of these promises though?

While some might believe that short-term trips aren’t worth the time, effort, and cost, a deeper look at short-term trips reveals that short-term missions are a long-term play. This means that **though we may not see immediate results from the trip, it is not in vain**. The yield may come at a later time.

First, **short-term trips provide the opportunity to share the love of Christ with those who may not have heard otherwise**. This may look like being the hands and feet of Jesus in providing wheelchairs or building homes and being able to share that we’re able to love others because Jesus first loved us. It may be helping teach English or having a holiday party that leads to spiritual conversation. As we partner with field staff who continue on in the relationships initiated, the efforts can be catalytic for the work that God is doing. The seeds that are planted may be harvested days, months, or years after those initial conversations.

In addition to the impact that can be made on others, **God may choose to use the experience to shape us!** One likely outcome from short-term missions is that God will begin to cultivate a heart for the nations. This may be praying for the people that you interacted with during your time, supporting field staff financially, or being an advocate for the nations in our church.

A second way that God may use a short-term trip is through **developing us as Christ-followers and as disciple-makers.**

Being out of our comfort zones can be like a pressure cooker, which is a great time for God to refine us. I vividly recall the lessons of dependency and humility that came with stepping off the plane in China for a summer where I didn't know where things were, how to get basic tasks completed, and being the outsider in terms of culture and communication. In addition to refining my character and perspective, God provided numerous conversations that allowed me to work on sharing the hope that I had in Christ.

Another way that short-term trips have a long-term impact is through the opportunity **to better understand what it would look like to go to the field.** God may plant a seed in you while you had the opportunity to plant seeds for others. He may lead you to uproot your life here for the sake of the gospel elsewhere.

In each of these scenarios, **God is at work.** He's working in the hearts of those that hear the gospel for the first time and in those that go. His glory is spreading wider and deeper as we step out to take part in the proclamation of him who called us out of darkness and into his marvelous light. These short-term trips are so much more than the weeklong experience at face value. Short-term missions are a long-term play.

For more information on how you can be involved with short-term missions, visit [graceb3.org/go](https://graceb3.org/go) 🌿



## IGNITE YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE 2023

IGNITEYOUTHLEADERSHIP.ORG



REGISTER AT  
GRACEB3.ORG/  
EVENTS

MARCH 10 & 11, 2023 DES MOINES, IA  
for 9th–12th graders \$85/student

Hear like-minded speakers and trainers equipping and training you with Biblical principles to reach friends and family with the gospel of Jesus Christ. 9th – 12th graders are invited to join Grace Student Ministry in attending the Ignite Youth Leadership Conference in Des Moines.

#### TRAVEL DETAILS:

Friday and Saturday, March 10 – 11, 2023  
Depart North Liberty at 4pm on March 10.  
Return by 8pm on March 11.

#### COST:

\$85 (covers travel, conference registration, and hotel)

SERMON NOTES		DATE:
MAIN IDEA:	NOTES:	

SERMON NOTES		DATE:
MAIN IDEA:	NOTES:	

GRACE STUDENT MINISTRY

# REC NIGHT

*Food Friends Games*

**FEB 11 • 7-9PM NORTH LIBERTY REC CENTER**

**REGISTER NOW AND INVITE A FRIEND OR TWO!**

Come out to the North Liberty Rec Center  
for some board games, the pool, gym games,  
and, of course, food! Bring a friend or two!

*Event is free to attend.*