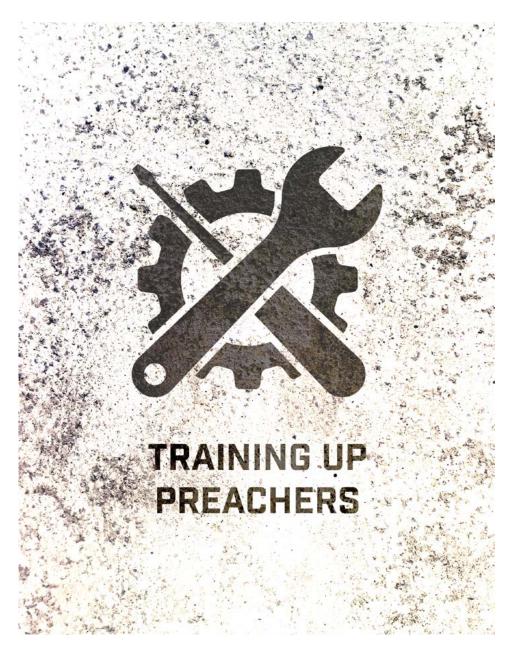
REACHING OTHERS IN YOUR BACKYARD

SUMMER PLANS FOR THE STUDENT MINISTRY

SERMON PREVIEW: JUDGES



UPCOMING EVENTS

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

BABY DEDICATION CLASS May 7 10:15-11:30AM

This class is designed to equip parents who wish to dedicate themselves before the church to raise their children in the Lord. It will address the biblical foundation for dedication, the parent's role, the church's responsibility, and the rationale for why we do not practice infant baptism. This class must be taken before parents can participate in the dedication ceremony, which is held on May 14.

GRANDPARENTING MATTERS May 7, 14, 21 6-8PM

Come join other grandparents for this 3-part seminar as we learn, share ideas, and develop insight to become the intentional grandparents God has called us be. This will be an investment with eternal benefits.

FREE FAMILY ROLLER SKATING May 13 1:30-3:30PM

Come to skate or just to hang out and meet others. Invite friends from school or that family next door. No sign up required - just come!

MEN'S BREAKFAST May 20 7:30-9AM

Men of all ages are invited! Men of Grace, invest in your spiritual life and enjoy a catered breakfast at the same time! Join us for devotional teaching and fellowship, and hear about all the men's ministry opportunities coming up this summer.

Coming Soon • Backyard Bible Club

CHILL

keeping our cool through faith in God





WHY ARE THERE SO MANY PREACHERS?

By Leading Pastor Brooks Simpson

love to preach the word of God. Nothing feels more natural to me than opening up the Bible and leading others to see how the gospel can transform their lives. The first time I preached at Grace Community Church was 1991. The pastor had designated the month of June as layman preaching month. I had only been a Christian for two years. I wore a suit (we were Baptists and everyone wore a suit) and preached a 45-minute message aimed at pleading with people to receive Jesus as their Savior. There was a lot of passion, heat, and emotionalism. I used the Bible — and everything I said was true — but I was all over the place. The message was not terribly coherent. A week after my debut, a very kind man gave me an article on how to read, understand, and then teach the Bible. I will never forget that article.

If you had been there, you might have questioned the wisdom which let an emotional powder keg with no formal training preach to a congregation. But the pastor and the elders at the time recognized and took 2 Timothy 2:1-2 seriously:

You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

Because those men allowed me to exercise a God-given gift of communication and gave me opportunities to sharpen my skills as a teacher and preacher, I am able to preach today. Grace Community Church has changed a lot since then. We've changed location and our name (from Grace Baptist to Grace Community Church) and become much larger. However, our mission endures to make disciples who make disciples.

Over the last decade we've focused on making disciples through planting churches in nearby communities, which required new qualified men to learn how to preach. From this we've seen the fruit of sending preachers to Solon, lowa City, and Riverside who took their first preaching reps at Grace. Truly, we should praise God and celebrate this fruit — and build on its harvest!

We continue to train future preachers in order to plant additional churches in communities around North Liberty. In the future, you'll likely see new faces on stage, some preaching for the first time. If someone else other than me is preaching on a Sunday, don't assume that "Brooks must be on vacation." Instead, pray for the man at the pulpit, and remember that just as previous Grace leaders had trusted me, we must entrust the gospel to younger faithful men who will teach the next generation.

Training up preachers also benefits the church in other ways beyond the obvious fruit. Ministry which develops preachers allows for

- More in the church to become better connected through varied teaching and preaching styles.
- The church to experience generational, racial, and socioeconomic diversity in its teaching.
- The church to see first-hand that the word of God, not the preacher, is what feeds the church.
- The church to be protected from the trap of cult-of-personality leadership.
- The teaching pastor to multiply his ministry through others.
- The teaching pastor to spend time on developing Bible studies and devotions for the benefit of the church.





By Student Ministry Director Brian Hagedorn

ummer is rapidly approaching and many of us are looking forward to the warmer weather, making plans for vacations and trips, and starting to get excited for a change of pace from the regular rhythms of a school year. The student ministry staff and volunteers have been planning and praying for the summer and our upcoming events, and we wanted to share an update with the church about what summer will look like for Grace Student Ministry.

This year we will be making a few changes to our summer scheduling. In June, we will be pressing pause on Refill (our Wednesday evening gathering) and will resume meeting weekly on Wednesdays in August. Summer attendance is always a bit sporadic and substantially lower because of changes in routines and family vacations. We want to acknowledge this reality and utilize the natural shift that occurs to serve our students and leaders by adjusting our schedule. Our volunteers are amazing and give so generously of their time and energy; they sacrifice time away from their families and other responsibilities in order to love, care for, and disciple our students every single week. They serve not just on Wednesdays, but also help with putting on special events, attending student events, going for coffee with students, praying for them, and much more. We want to honor their faithful service in our ministry and to our church by giving them time to rest, grow spiritually, and have flexibility as their summer schedules change too.

So what will summer for Grace Student Ministry look like without a weekly Wednesday night gathering? We will host a large group activity each month throughout the summer for community and connection. We'll be headed to Adventureland in June, hosting

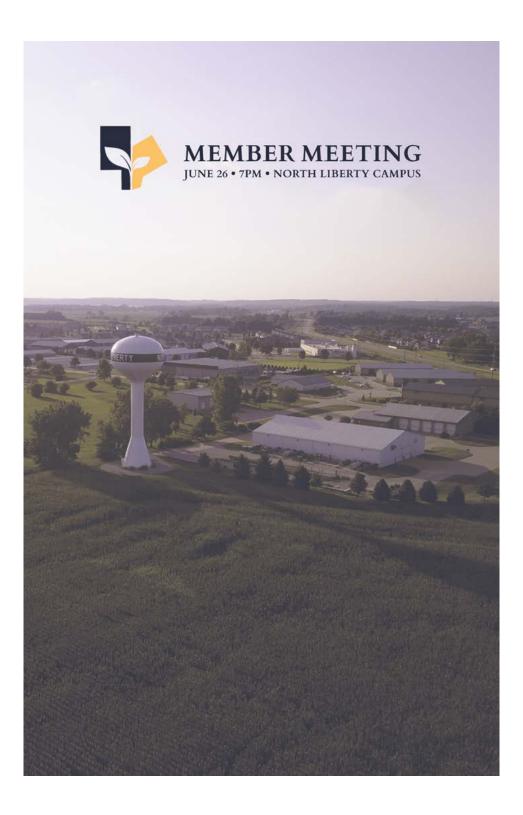
a get-together at a local park for outdoor games, food, and fellowship in July, and then a Fall kick-off event in August. In addition to these large group events, each Life Group (small groups based on grade and gender) will be getting together several times throughout the summer. These events take many different forms; some may get together for flag football, others may have a bonfire, and others may choose to do a craft day! Students will have the opportunity to serve a Backyard Bible Club or two throughout the summer.

Our student ministry staff will be hosting a junior high book study every Tuesday morning and a senior high book study every Thursday evening through the summer. We will base our conversations on the book *The Secular Creed* by Rebecca McLaughlin. In her book, she explores five contemporary claims and seeks to help the reader understand the claim, where it falls short, and offers a biblical lens and response to each one.

This summer things might look slightly different, but our vision is still the same: to make disciples who make disciples by being a place where students are loved, known, accepted, taught about Jesus, and challenged to grow! God is doing amazing things in the lives of our students and it's a joy for us to serve and come alongside them as they seek the Lord and take that good news to their friends. Please join us in praying for this summer, for our students and their families to grow in the Lord together, for our volunteers to be refreshed and encouraged, and for our students to be bold in sharing the hope of the gospel with their friends and peers.

So to recap:

- Refill will be on break beginning in June to give flexibility for families and rest for our volunteer team
- We will host separate weekly studies for junior and senior high students.
- We will gather throughout the summer for Life Group and some whole group events.
- Lastly, we will encourage all of our students to serve together at a Backyard Bible Club or two. №



THE LEGACY COALITION PRESENTS

Grandparenting Matters

SEMINAR

SUNDAY EVENINGS • MAY 7, 14, 21 • 6-8 SIGN UP AT GRACEB3.ORG/EVENTS

Are you ready to Grandparent on Purpose? For some of you, this seminar will affirm the good things you are already doing with your grandkids. For others, it will shake your world and give you a brand new perspective on what it means to be a grandparent. Whether you are on one end of the spectrum or the other, or in the middle somewhere, you will be deeply impacted by this seminar. Come join other grandparents as we learn, share ideas, and develop insight to become the intentional grandparents God has called us be. This will be an investment with eternal benefits.

Don't Wait! Register today at: graceb3.org/events







ackyard Bible Club (BBC) is something we look forward to every year at Grace. We take the traditional VBS model and move it to backyards and parks. This model provides a natural way to build relationships in our communities by engaging neighborhood children ages 3 through 6th grade with the gospel. We have seen so much fruit from BBC in the past and look forward to seeing God work again this summer. Examples of this are unchurched children attending, neighbor connections taking place, and teens serving younger children.

If you've never been to a BBC it may seem overwhelming, but it is actually quite simple. Each site chooses the week that works best for them, with sites running usually Sunday—Wednesday or Monday—Thursday. The host chooses the location, either a backyard or neighborhood park. As kids arrive they check in with volunteers, and soon the activities begin. A typical

evening includes songs, a skit, and a Bible lesson. Then the kids break into groups for games, crafts, and snacks. The final night, the entire family is invited to stay for food and a bouncy house. This provides an opportunity for families to connect as well as observe what their children have been doing during the week.

So how can you get involved? The whole body is needed in order to make BBC successful. People with various giftings are needed, both behind the scenes as well as working directly with the kids and parents. If you have served at a BBC before, please consider hosting a site in your yard or nearby park. If you enjoy teaching, making snacks, leading games or engaging with children, there is a place for you. BBC is a great opportunity to serve alongside your family and community group. Be on the lookout for specific dates and locations and prayerfully consider how you can be involved. 峰



Free skating for the family!
Come to skate or just to hang out and
meet others. Invite friends from
school or that family next door. No
sign up required - just come!



By Theogene and Adela Havugimana

Theogene and Adela Havugimana are our Global Outreach Task Force Multi-Ethnic and Prayer Leaders

"And he said to him, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And the second is like it: you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend on all the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 22:37-40 ESV)

One of the Pharisees came to Jesus and asked him what the great commandment in the law is. The Bible tells us that he did it just to test Jesus. Jesus told him that the greatest one is "...love God with all your heart...all your soul... and the second is like it: you shall love your neighbor as yourself."

In this passage, we have two main words that are hard to put into practice: "love" and "neighbor." When people try to define what love is and how to love others, it can be confusing. Likewise, the word "neighbor" requires context—who should be called neighbor? This same question was brought up during the time of Jesus, the disciples, and the apostles. 'Who is your neighbor?' Is he a good friend who agrees with you in all you want to do? Does he have to be the person who is ready to help and understand you? What does the Bible tell us about this?

The word "neighbor" is translated from the Greek *plesion* (from pelas, "near") and is used as an adverb accompanied by the article – "the (one) near." Jesus used "neighbor" to mean those dwelling around you. Based on these two Greek words, the word neighbor in Greek has a wider range of meaning than that of the English word "neighbor." Historically, people in the agricultural areas of Palestine lived in villages and walked to and from their daily work. This meant that people naturally interacted with others to a high degree, and domestic life was touched at every point by a wide circle of neighbors. The historical understanding for who one's "neighbor" is encompassed a very large group – likely the entire village.

Our cultural understanding of who our neighbor is has undoubtedly changed over time, but God's understanding has not. We cannot say that we serve God and hate our neighbor. The Bible calls that a lie. It is a commandment, if we love God, we must love our neighbors. (1 John 4:20-21 ESV). Further, we must help our neighbors when they have tribulation and misfortune.

"But do not gloat over the day of your brother in the day of his misfortune; do not rejoice over the people of Judah in the day of their ruin; do not boast in the day of distress. Do not enter the gate of my people in the day of their calamity... do not loot his wealth in the day of his calamity." (Obadiah 1:12-13 ESV)

God calls us to conform our hearts to be like his. Instead of gloating over misfortune and boasting in their distress, we need to help, comfort, and pray for our neighbors. We need also to pray for the church and God's ministries; to let the Holy Spirit lead us in reaching our neighbors and the nations. By doing these things, we help fulfill our great commission. Our mission as believers is to "... go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15).

But without God's love in us, we will not sacrifice ourselves, our time, or our wealth to reach others. Jesus told his disciples to be his witnesses beginning in Jerusalem where they were, then to the end of the world (Acts 1:8). Our "Jerusalem" is where our neighbors live.

We encourage you to participate in local outreach and serve your community. Serve your neighborhood and see how you can change the lives of others. Pray and ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Do not rely on your wealth and skills, but seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in everything you do. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we will be more effective and serve the right group at the right time. Through prayers we will have godly oneness and the power of the Holy Spirit. Help change the world, starting in our communities and surrounding cities! Shalom!

For more information on how you can be involved in this local outreach in the "Multi-Ethnic Friends and Intercessors group" please visit *graceb3.org/go* #



By Creative Arts Director Steve Oliver

uatemala has the largest economy in Central America, but it unfortunately has the 2nd highest poverty rate in all of the Americas. An organization called Bethel Ministries International is based in Guatemala, and for over a decade, Grace has partnered with them in sending teams of volunteers from our congregation to be the hands and feet of Jesus in Guatemala. The team distributes donated wheelchairs, visits the poor in their affliction, and builds houses for destitute families.

When our team was there in February, we saw a contrast between this beautiful land with volcanoes, mountains, beautiful trees, and sugar cane fields, and then extreme poverty where children don't have shoes, or walls, or even sometimes a bed. The average wage for people at this poverty level is the equivalent of five American dollars a day. They are cooking on open flames, bathing and washing their clothes in the closest body of water, and just simply trying to survive. Still, in the midst of

this incredible hardship, we saw some people with an overwhelming faith in God. Some had Bibles, some didn't, a few could read, a few couldn't, but Jesus is most certainly in the very heart of these people's situation. And for those who don't know God, he is still there as well, and we were there to point them to Christ and the Bible.

One day was wheelchair distribution day, where we were able to provide almost 50 wheelchairs to people who simply couldn't afford them. As we worked to modify the wheelchairs to fit each person, we saw smiles of thankfulness and moments of joy that brought us to tears. The thankfulness of the Guatemalan people is overwhelming.

We visited several families at their homes, offering them food, clothing, medicine, Bibles, and sharing the hope of the gospel in their native language. We also built homes from the ground up for some of them. In the span of two days, we were able to lay a concrete foundation, and create a home of metal studs and sheet metal. Each home had a separate bathroom, enough beds for each family member, and a cooking stove. After the structure was up, the missionaries would paint the house, so it wasn't just a shelter, or just a house, but could truly be their home. After all was built and painted, our team brought in clothing, toys, cooking utensils, and decorated the interior of the home. We then gathered together inside and dedicated the home to God and offered thanks to God for all that he had done. We prayed with the family, encouraging them to enjoy their new home, to read the word of God, and to pray for us as we promised to continue to pray for them.

God truly blessed each of us on this trip. We watched people accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior, saw the power of Christ's promises at work in the hearts of the impoverished, and witnessed God work miracles in advancing his kingdom.

The next trip is July 26 – August 2, 2023 (registration deadline is May 7, 2023). If you're considering going on this trip, I would say: don't hesitate. You don't have to have any specific skills, you just have to be willing to use your hands and feet to help Bethel Ministries in the work they're already doing. Truly anyone could do our tasks. It is a one-week trip, and you will work alongside your brothers and sisters in Christ to truly make a difference in people's lives. Don't miss this opportunity for God to work in and through you.

For more info, go to graceb3.org/missions/guatemala &







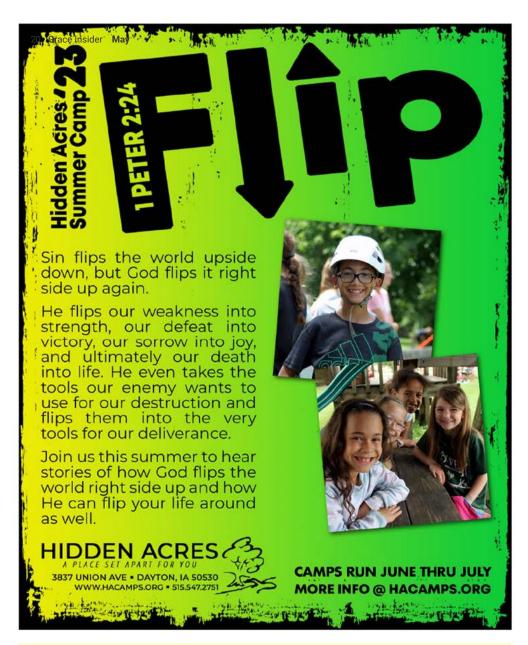
By Communications Director Jacob Varvel

t is a joy to partner with anyone in our church family when it comes to fulfilling this vision of making disciples. Therefore it is a joy to announce that two of our own have joined the staff to assist in doing just that! Joining (and rejoining) the staff as part-time coordinators of Women's Ministry are Tianna Vance and Kat George.

Tianna, married to Sam and first-time mom to a baby girl, joins us from the Downtown Campus. She is excited to share her gifts with Grace Community Church. The youngest of six children, Tianna is no stranger to the delight of being a part of a larger team. She has been attending Grace since 2016 and loves that Grace is so community-minded and committed to the truth of Scripture. She is personally very passionate about creating community, building relationships where people encounter the living God and experience him in a personal way. With her experience, passion, and gifts, we are blessed to have her join the team.

Rejoining the staff is Kat George. For those of you who have been at Grace for a while, you will remember that Kat served in the Women's Ministry in years past. After taking a few years off, she is thrilled to return, particularly as part of a team that will work together to serve, pray for, and create equipping opportunities for the women of Grace. Wife to Chad and mother to Ben (20), Jackson (18), Austen (17), and Jane (15), Kat too loves to "do life" in a crowd. She is vocal about her love of walking alongside women in all situations and will NEVER say no to a chance to grab a cup of coffee and chat about life!

These two gals are excited to get to know all of you, and if you get the chance, stop them in the halls and ask them anything! №





Apply for a scholarship at graceb3.org/scholarship

Grace Community Church believes that church camp plays a vital role in the spiritual development of our children and their families. To that end, we endeavor to see every child have the opportunity to go to camp. We realize that finances may be a deterrent for some families sending their children or teens to camp. We want to help offset the cost of camp by offering scholarships so that finances are not a determining factor.



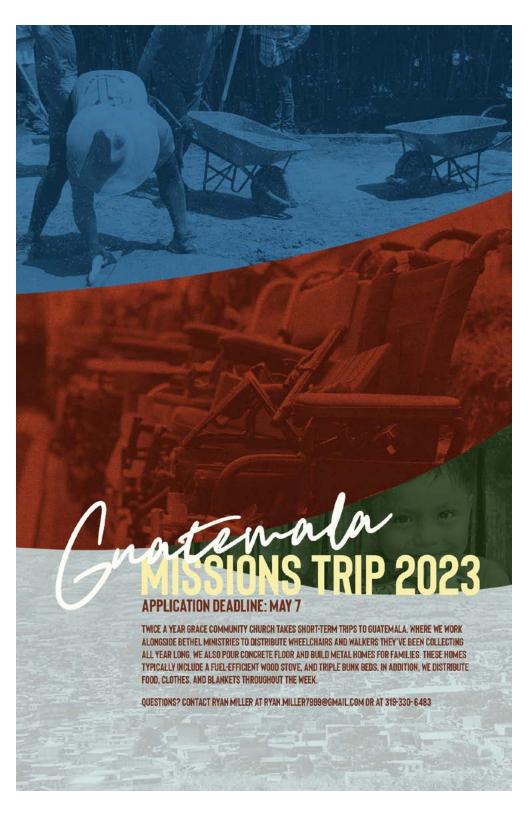
By Lead Pastor Brooks Simpson

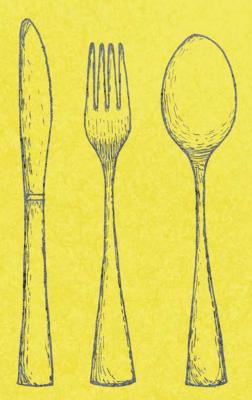
As a kid in the 1970's, I grew up playing my parents' records. Simon and Garfunkel's song, "Mrs. Robinson" is about the loss of innocence as a nation. It was released in 1968 when I was one year old. Growing up I would play my parents' Simon and Garfunkel album and listen to "Mrs. Robinson" over and over. One verse stuck out to me:

Where have you gone, Joe DiMaggio?
Our nation turns its lonely eyes to you
Woo, woo, woo
What's that you say, Mrs. Robinson?
Joltin' Joe has left and gone away
Hey, hey, hey
Hey, hey, hey

Joe DiMaggio played baseball for the New York Yankees from 1936 to 1951 with a three-year pause from 43-45 to serve his country during World War II. Paul Simon used DiMaggio as a metaphor for the way America used to be when he was a kid. Right was right and wrong was wrong. The Nazis were bad and America was good. By the time 1968 rolled around, Joltin Joe and the moral certainty of the 1940s and 1950s was long gone.

This decline is not unique to our time and culture. Within one generation of crossing the Jordan River, Israel had forgotten their God and turned to the gods of their neighbors. They decided the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Joshua was no longer relevant now that they had a home and prosperity. The book of Judges chronicles the consequences of forgetting God, the pain it brings, and the faithfulness of the God who loves his people too much to abandon them. The church in the West is not ancient Israel, but there are lessons we can learn from this tragic period in Israel's history. We will begin diving into these lessons in Judges in June. #





men's breakfast 05.20 7:30-9am

sign up by 5.18 at graceb3.org/events

Men of all ages are invited!

Men of Grace, invest in your spiritual life and enjoy a catered breakfast at the same time! Join us for devotional teaching and fellowship, and hear about all the men's ministry opportunities coming this summer.

Event is free. Free will donation accepted.

Questions? Contact office@graceb3.org