

GRACE INSIDER

OCTOBER 2023

A photograph of a church sanctuary during a service. A man in a light blue shirt and grey pants stands at a podium on a wooden stage, addressing a congregation. The stage is flanked by two large screens displaying the text "WHERE'S YOUR HOPE" with a large yellow question mark. The sanctuary has a high, ornate wooden altar and pews filled with people. Sunlight streams in from the side, creating a warm atmosphere.

LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING FORWARD: a downtown congregation update

[grandparenting with a purpose](#)

[a tale of two students](#)



UPCOMING EVENTS IN OCTOBER

Learn more and/or sign up
for events by tapping
on the events or visit
graceb3.org/events



WOMEN'S FALL BIBLE STUDY

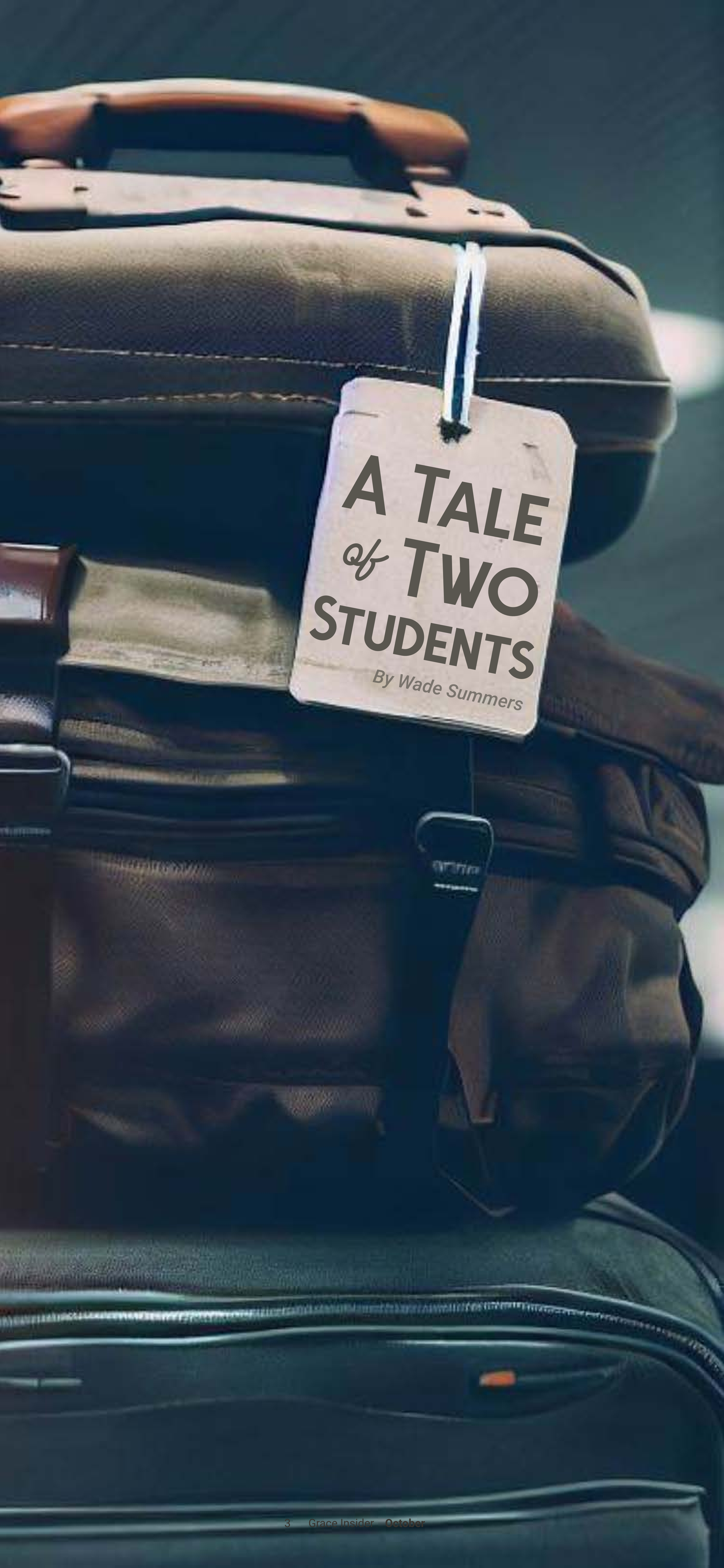
*HOSEA: UNFAILING
LOVE CHANGES
EVERYTHING*

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FRIDAYS

RECEIVING THE KING

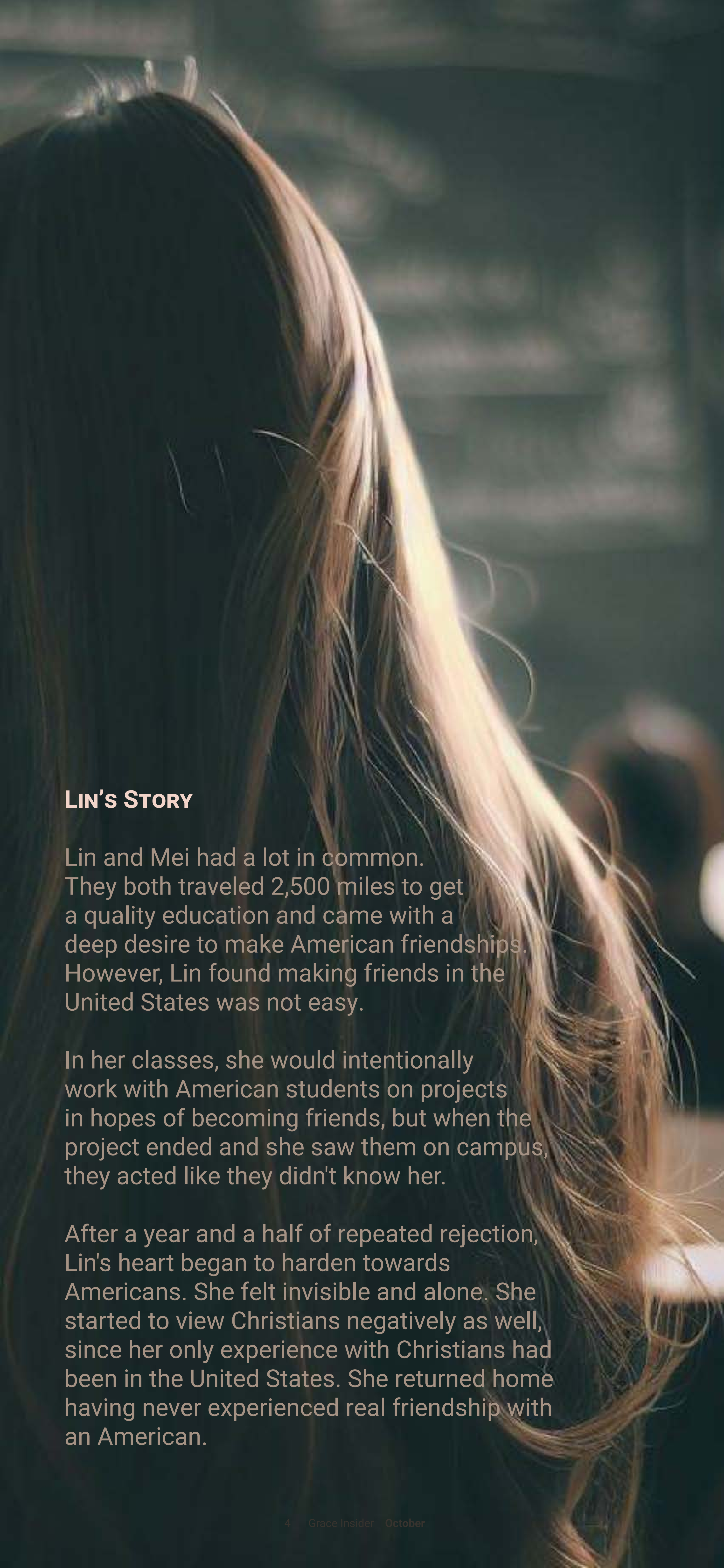
a study on mark

→
ONGOING



A TALE *of* TWO STUDENTS

By Wade Summers



LIN'S STORY

Lin and Mei had a lot in common. They both traveled 2,500 miles to get a quality education and came with a deep desire to make American friendships. However, Lin found making friends in the United States was not easy.

In her classes, she would intentionally work with American students on projects in hopes of becoming friends, but when the project ended and she saw them on campus, they acted like they didn't know her.

After a year and a half of repeated rejection, Lin's heart began to harden towards Americans. She felt invisible and alone. She started to view Christians negatively as well, since her only experience with Christians had been in the United States. She returned home having never experienced real friendship with an American.

MEI'S STORY

Mei heard about the international student Easter put on by Christians and decided to join it. She was welcomed into an American's home for dinner and joined her hosts to hear Pastor Brooks explain the meaning of Easter. She was fascinated by the story of Jesus' death and resurrection and was excited to meet a Christian from her own country at the event. She eagerly responded 'yes' when invited to join them to read about Jesus in the Bible in her native language.

A few weeks later, Mei received a scholarship from Grace to attend International Getaway, a four-day retreat for international students. Mei was thrilled to have the chance to spend time away from campus to rest and learn more about Jesus. She is still deciding if she believes what she has learned, but she is filled with gratitude for the way Christians welcomed her.

It would be great if every international student's story turned out like Mei's. Unfortunately, Lin's experience is much more common than Mei's, with **75% of international students not getting the chance to enter an American's home.**

CHANGING A STUDENT'S LIFE

God is bringing students from 107 different countries to our community, and for many, this is their first chance to have a Christian friend.

At Grace, we are partnering with other churches to make sure these students are welcomed into American homes and that genuine friendships between Americans and international students are formed. We call this partnership International Neighbors, and it exists to make it easier for you to have a

friendship with an international student, make sure they experience Christian hospitality, and provide them the chance to learn the meaning of American holidays.

How To GET INVOLVED

On November 4, we will host a Thanksgiving dinner for international students. We need volunteers to open their homes or come alongside another family to make a light version of a Thanksgiving meal. We also need volunteers to **provide desserts** and volunteers to assist with the **set-up and clean-up**.

INTERESTED?

Let us know by filling out the form here.

Questions?

Email Wade Summers here. 🌿



Looking Back & Looking Forward

By Downtown Pastor Jason Blackley

ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 6, GRACE DOWNTOWN CELEBRATED ITS TENTH ANNIVERSARY AS A CHURCH. Though Grace Community Church is one church in two locations, for the last ten years a group of elders, leaders, and long-term Iowa City inhabitants have been discipling one another, sharing the gospel, and welcoming others into their church, faith, and homes.

As we reflect on the last ten years of Grace Downtown, three words come to mind: thanksgiving, dependence, and faithfulness.

THANKSGIVING: Over our ten-year history, we have much to be thankful for! The Lord has provided in numerous ways despite difficulty and obstacles. We have overcome bats (in both locations), less than ideal meeting spaces, unexpected displacement from a facility, core team turnover, people moving away, and the normal everyday challenges of discipleship. However, the thing for which I am most grateful is **the people he has brought our way**. Whether it is the folks who have been here from the beginning, the amazing people we have sent out and who have joined us, or the incredible students we have met, God has brought us people who love him and one another so well! So, we are thankful.

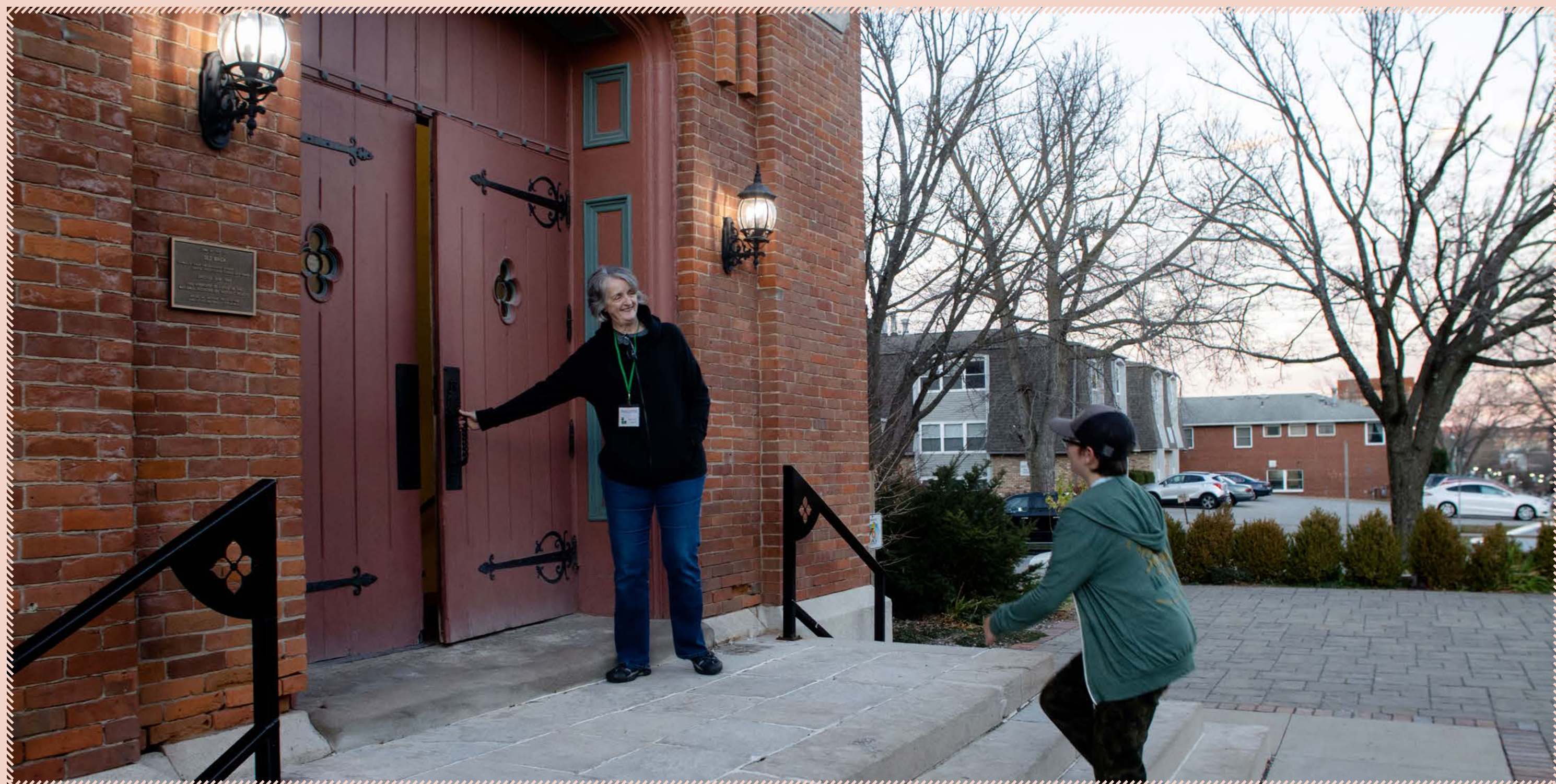


DEPENDENCE: There have been so many times when we have had to depend on the Lord in ways big and small. We need to depend upon the Lord today for a variety of reasons. First, daily we are ministering in a culture that disregards Christ, church, and religion. **We are sharing the good news with a generation that is surrounded by bad news, and the religion and churches they have known have not necessarily shared the true good news of the gospel with them.** In other words, they do not even know what they need. Second, we are trying to do the impossible. We are sinful, broken people who are trying to share a supernatural message with a world that doesn't think they need it. We are trying to help people step out of darkness and into light. We are trying to bring a sense of community to people living in an epidemic of loneliness. Lastly, as we consider what it looks like to step out from Grace and become a fully planted, autonomous church, we face challenges. We would like to move to Sunday morning services, which will change things. We need the Lord to provide finances and building stability. We need planted people who will live in the Iowa

City area long-term. We need to provide gospel-centered, worshipful, fun children's ministry for a church with children who are getting older.

FAITHFULNESS: God has been faithful, he is faithful, and he will be faithful! The same God who parted the seas, delivered his people, rose from the grave, gave the Spirit, and formed us as a church is living and active in us and through us today. We can count on his faithfulness. He also asks for our faithfulness. The question moving forward is, “will I be faithful and focus on faithfulness?” It is so easy to focus on fruitfulness by relying on man-made measures of success. It is so easy to get caught up in the logistics and preferences of running and attending a church. **What God is asking for is our faithfulness to be good stewards of the resources, people, and opportunities he has placed in front of us.**





WHAT'S NEXT? Throughout this school year the Grace Downtown elders and leaders will pray through and do the homework to determine **what benchmarks the downtown church must reach to become a fully planted, autonomous church.** These benchmarks include things like bringing more elders and families into the church, moving the service time to Sunday morning, and joining Harbor Network: a network of churches focusing on health and multiplication.

HOW CAN YOU BE A PART?

PRAYER - Pray that God does a work among us; that we depend on him and that we are faithful. Pray that he provides for the work he has called us to do.

DONATE - Your faithful stewardship of the money God has provided and giving financially at Grace impacts the future of all current and future churches that Grace plants.

PARTICIPATE - We need families and planted people. Over half of Grace Downtown is transient – students, medical residents, etc. We need at least half of the church to be planted in the Iowa City area to support one another and reach new people. A few planted families and individuals would make a huge difference in what we are trying to accomplish.

He will remain faithful, and in this we rejoice and desire to plan accordingly. Thanks for your partnership in the gospel! 🌿

RECEIVING THE KING

a study on mark

pick up your copy
in the office today or
[download the study here.](#)





Fall Grandparenting Ministry Updates

By Elder Tom Widmer

WHAT INFLUENCE DID YOUR GRANDPARENTS HAVE ON YOUR LIFE? Do you ever wonder if there is more you could do to help your children pass on an authentic faith in Christ Jesus? Does it sometimes seem like your grandchildren don't have the faith you would desire them to have? When you see the world in which your grandchildren are growing up, do you feel vulnerable and unsure? While there are no magic or systematic guarantees, the Bible does give direction and instruction in passing on our faith to the next generation.

Many churches today lack teaching and shepherding regarding the biblical role of grandparenting and how to pass on our faith to our grandchildren. Realizing this and sensing the leading of the Holy Spirit, **Grace Community Church is starting a ministry to provide resources and support to better equip grandparents to intentionally leave a legacy that points our families to an authentic relationship with Jesus.**

“Grandparenting Matters” fall training is in full swing, so consider attending our next event: the **two-day Legacy Grandparenting Summit in Davenport on October 20 and 21**. At this simulcast of the national conference (happening in Dallas, Texas), you will be immersed in solid biblical training on grandparenting by some great teachers. My wife and I attended this conference last year, and it totally changed how we grandparent. We now have a plan, focus, and motivation which we’d been lacking. To attend the conference, go to www.legacycoalition.com and click on “register for the summit” to register for the remote site in Davenport. The simulcast site we have selected is Grandview Baptist Church in Davenport. The cost is \$59 per person. Some of us attending will commute both days and some will stay the night. Contact me at tomw@graceb3.org if you have questions or need transportation.

Check out the new Grandparenting section at www.graceb3.org (under Ministries). You can learn more about Grace’s grandparenting ministry and see a listing of upcoming opportunities, resources, and events. Also, to receive updates about ministry opportunities, trainings, and gatherings, make sure you are signed up for the “Grandparenting Ministry Email List” at www.graceb3.org/grandparents.

I look forward to having you join this important quest to intentionally live out our faith as an example to the coming generation.

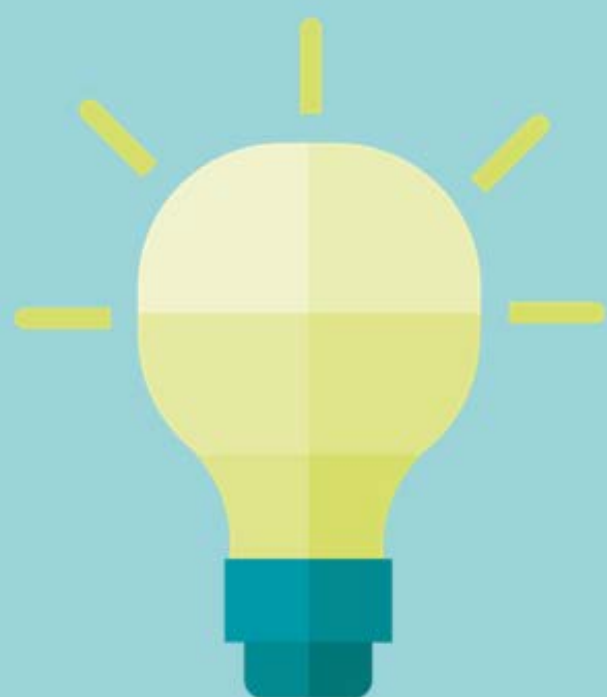
I want to see my grandchildren and great-grandchildren living for Jesus. I know you do too! 🌿



Legacy Grandparenting Summit • 2023

Two inspiring days to
help you build your
spiritual legacy.

With the Legacy Coalition Summit,
you will:



RECEIVE WISDOM AND DIRECTION

Hear from an incredible lineup
of speakers across eight
different sessions.



FIND SPIRITUAL INSPIRATION

You'll be encouraged through
worship and our highly gifted
musicians and artists.



GAIN COMFORT IN COMMUNITY

Gather with many other
grandparents who want to build
their spiritual legacy.

***Register for the simulcast site
in Davenport on Oct 19-20 here.***



Tammy Knaack

member feature

Over the past six years Tammy and Robert Knaack have served in several capacities on Sunday mornings, and grown in their passion for sharing the gospel with all corners of the globe through [Jungle Aviation and Relay Services \(JAARS\)](#). When you see Tammy greeting or ushering, be sure to ask about the latest harvest from their garden, what book she's currently studying, or about her love of puzzles!

TAMMY, TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY.

I lived in Ankeny prior to getting married and moving to Swisher. In Ankeny, I attended First Family Church with my late husband. It's a very sound biblical church with a great pastor, and the people there supported me and my late husband through his cancer diagnosis and death in 2014. They were great and many continue to be my very good friends.

Robert and I married in April 2017. I was never fortunate enough to be a mother, but I married into his family of three adult children and one grandson. His sons and daughter all live in the area so we see them often.

I was fortunate enough to retire early last year. Before retiring, I attended a mission's fair at Grace and met some wonderful people who work with JAARS. There,

I learned about the paid, supported, and volunteer opportunities that I could do from home. After I retired, I decided to learn more about volunteering for JAARS and soon started on their engagement team.

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO MAKE GRACE YOUR HOME CHURCH?

Robert was a member of Grace for several years before we were married. When I started visiting Grace with Robert during the winter of 2016 and attending his small group, I found another family here at Grace—one that I didn't think I would find again after moving here from Ankeny.

WHAT GROUPS OR MINISTRIES ARE YOU CURRENTLY SERVING WITH AT GRACE?

Robert and I have served as ushers and door greeters on Sundays for the past couple of years. He's also part of the mowing crew, and I help with Extending Grace during their events. We attend a Grace community group, lead another small group with our neighbors, and enjoy sharing life together with both groups! I am also leading a Bible study in our home.

WHAT ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT?

There are places around the world where the church cannot easily go, and where language development has not occurred. These often exist in remote and hard to reach places. I'm passionate about JAARS' mission to share the gospel with these hard-to-reach places by reducing the barriers of mountains, rivers, deserts, and oceans through providing transportation and technology resources. They ease the burdens

of Christian workers serving in remote locations, as well as the people they serve, by offering safe transportation. This support alleviates the concerns of logistics, medical transportation, and provides commerce and humanitarian opportunities for local people groups. They deliver God's word not only physically, but also by delivering the translators and teams working to make the gospel known in every language.

IF THE CONGREGATION WANTED TO GET INVOLVED WITH YOUR PASSION, WHAT'S THEIR BEST NEXT STEP?

If you'd like to get involved with JAARS or learn more about the ministry, email me at tlamb2015@hotmail.com or stop by the JAARS booth during the Missions Emphasis Week fair on Sunday, October 29.



WOMEN'S FALL BIBLE STUDY

*HOSEA: UNFAILING LOVE
CHANGES EVERYTHING*

Fridays 9:30-11am, starting 9/29,
North Liberty Campus
Childcare provided
for infants - PreK

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

