Church Finances:

A December Update

Christmas Giving
Opportunity

WINTER THRIVE CLASSES



UPCOMING EVENTS IN DECEMBER

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

8TH ----



10TH ----

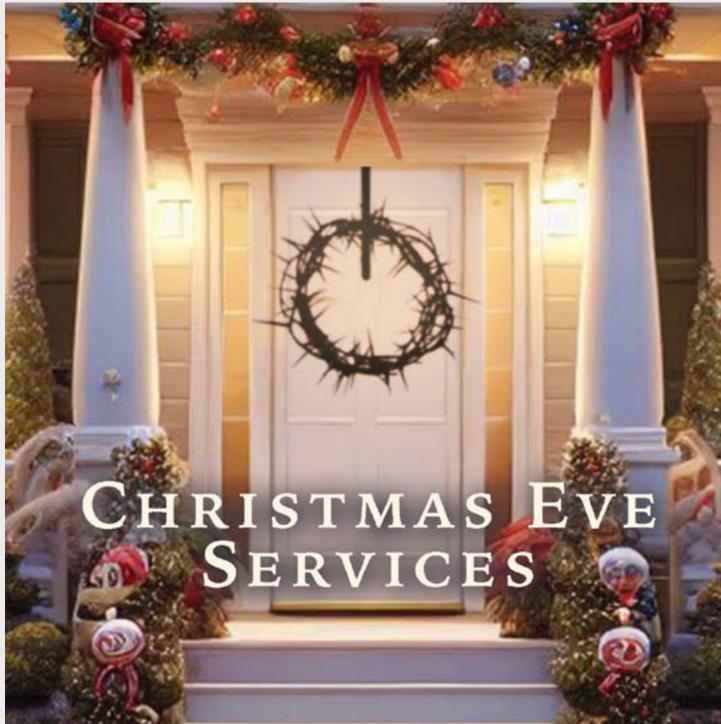
13TH | Last Fall Refill



10TH ---

2/TH -





1/21-3/24 WINTER THRIVE CLASSES

By Spiritual Formation Pastor Dave Kirk

"...but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither, in all that he does, he prospers." Psalm 1:2-3

As I READ THE PASSAGE ABOVE and passages like it in the Scriptures, I get excited about the power of God's word in our lives. Truly, God's words are true wisdom and are essential to building a life, a family, a career, and a church. At Grace Community Church, we take God at his word. We are excited to join him in equipping people to enjoy their relationship with him and to make disciples of Jesus one relationship at a time.

Being people of God's word is a top value at Grace. By that we mean we aspire to be people who study and meditate on God's word and live daily with a biblical worldview, applying Scripture to all of life. Our desire is to see God grow us to be mature in our faith and our relationships with Christ and each other. To that end, Grace strives to provide equipping opportunities for people of

all ages and backgrounds. One of the ways we do that is through Thrive classes.

A Thrive class is simply an equipping class designed to help you grow in your knowledge and application of the word of God, and connect relationally with others as you walk through the class together. In other words, the Thrive classes are like a tool shed – in each class you can pick up a skill or tool to help you grow in your walk with Christ and as a disciple-maker. We design our Thrive classes to be short, focused learning opportunities. Our classes are typically ten weeks or less and are offered twice a year, in the fall and winter.

I am excited about the Thrive classes we plan to offer to start the new year. Thrive classes will begin on Sunday, January 21, 2024, and finish on or before March 24. The main focus will be on growing as people of God's word, being intentional about caring for one another, and living missionally. I encourage each of you to sign up for a Thrive class this semester, as there is something for everyone no matter your age, experience, or spiritual journey. See the list below for our winter Thrive classes.

I look forward to seeing how the Lord grows us this winter as a church family and as individuals.

> In each class you can pick up a skill or tool to help you grow in your walk with Christ and as a disciple-maker.

8:30AM CLASSES

Practical Disciple Making

Teachers: Scott Heemstra/Austin Ward

Jesus' last words to his closest followers were, "Go and make disciples." But how? How do you personally and practically make disciples who make disciples? How do you reach your friends, neighbors, and family with the gospel and help them do the same? Join us to learn biblical principles and practical tools to share the hope of the gospel in your day-to-day life.

The Evidence and Reason for God

Teachers: Bart Floyd/Andy Schaekenbach

This class explores the reality of God by looking at evidence and reason for his existence. We cover common objections that people have to the truth of the existence of God and how to stand firm on a biblical foundation of truth. This class is great for those who are seeking answers and those interested in apologetics.

Walking with God through Pain and Suffering Teachers: Jacob Varvel and Peter Chidister

Why is there so much pain and suffering in the world? How do we handle it in a way that won't destroy us, but could actually make us stronger and wiser? This class will read and discuss selected portions of Tim Keller's book Walking with God Through Pain and Suffering, exploring the philosophical problem of suffering, the bible's teaching on suffering, and the experience of dealing with suffering in practical terms.

Material Cost: \$9 (for book)

10:15AM CLASSES

Growing in Christ

Teachers: Dave Kirk

"I really want to grow in Christ, but I am not sure how." "I just became a Christian, so what do I do now?" If you find yourself saying things like this to yourself, then this class is definitely for you. We will explore what it means to grow in Christ and help you understand some key things about your union with Christ, your identity in Christ, and how to live out your faith.

Deep Dive (for 9th-12th graders)

Teachers: Brian Hagedorn/GSM leaders

Come learn how to dive deeper into the Bible through inductive Bible study! Whether you've studied the Bible for a while or have never tried, this class is for you!

11:30AM CLASSES

Premarital Counseling Class

Teachers: Dave Kirk

This class is designed for couples preparing for marriage and recently-married couples who've not previously had premarital counseling.

We will discuss aspects of God's design for marriage, including its purpose to reflect God's nature to you, your partner, and the world around you. We'll work through biblical evaluation tools to help set your marriage on a solid foundation, preparing you to handle together what life may bring. This is an interactive class that will help you understand and evaluate your relationship in the context of the gospel and God's kingdom and help you grow deeper in your walk with Christ and in community. We use the book Tying the Knot by Rob Green as a textbook for the class.

Cost: \$10 for the book, Tying the Knot



By Operations Director Caleb Stamp

CHURCH FINANCES A DECEMBER UPDATE

It's December: A Month when we eagerly run to the Mailbox to read Great-Aunt Ethel's Christmas card, but instead find fundraising letters from the ASPCA, UNICEF, PBS, and our alma mater. They ask us to generously support them with year-end financial gifts.

Have you ever thought about why we hear so much about generosity in December? Cynics might say it's because nonprofits want to round out their balance sheets, or because donors are looking to reduce their tax burden. While these things are real, the underlying reason is this:

December is a month when Christians all over the world stop and contemplate the wonderful gift that God gave us through his Son, and we consider the undeserved forgiveness we've received. We spend time thinking about God's generosity toward us and naturally look for ways to reflect that generosity in our own context.

I realize having the Operations Director talk about year-end giving feels transactional — like those letters in your mailbox or when the store clerk tries to sell you the extended warranty. "Give X so that we can do Y." That's not what I mean, and it's not the message I want you to receive. Focused, intentional generosity is much more than that!

Yes, giving to our church enables us to carry out various ministries and activities, but more fundamentally, it reflects our understanding that everything we 'own' is a gift from our generous God. We demonstrate faithfulness by giving of our time, skills, knowledge, and resources (money, food, clothing, etc.) to advance the gospel.

So what's 'the ask'? Pray. Please pray and seek God's leading as you consider your generosity this month. Elsewhere in this issue, you'll read about an opportunity on Christmas Eve to support World Wide Village's work in Haiti. Maybe God has been leading you to support a certain ministry or missionary. Perhaps you're being pulled towards giving more regularly at Grace. The important thing is to seek God's will and be faithful to share what he has given you in a way that glorifies him.

Earlier, I mentioned some cynical ideas about giving for tax purposes — sorry about that. Since giving does have tax implications, there are a few logistical things for you to be aware of:

♦ Donations made online (graceb3.org/give) between now and December 31 will appear on your 2023 giving statement.

♦ Cash or checks left in the offering boxes between now and December 31 will appear on your 2023 giving statement. Per IRS regulations, all checks left/placed/received in the offering boxes after December 31 will be acknowledged for 2024, regardless of the date written on them.

Any checks mailed to the church must be postmarked by December 31 in order to be included on your 2023 giving statement.

If you have any questions about year-end giving or want to discuss other ways to give, feel free to reach out to me via email at calebs@graceb3.org or by phone at 319-626-2040. *

Giving Update July 1 - September 30, 2023		
General Fund Giving	\$ 457,766	\$ 464,007
Focused Giving		
Counseling Scholarships	3,000	291
Children's Ministry Bibles	1,700	296
Daddy Daughter Dance	3,000	495
Short-Term Mission Scholarships	2,000	525
Extending Grace - Backpacks and School Supplies	4,500	10
Extending Grace - Foster Family Groceries	3,000	246
Extending Grace - Foster Family Encouragement	2,500	375
TOTAL	\$ 477,466	\$ 466,245





All children age 3 and up will join their parents for the worship service in the auditorium on these dates during the holiday season

Classes will be available for the nursery and 2-year-old rooms.

Questions?

Contact Natasha at natasham@graceb3.org



Christmas Giving Opportunity

World Wide Village in Haiti

By Executive Pastor Josh Haveman

FOR MANY YEARS, GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH HAS PARTNERED WITH WORLD WIDE VILLAGE to bring hope and help to the people of Haiti through regular mission trips. Teams of doctors, dentists, and a variety of other helpers have gone to serve and share the love of Christ. Travel restrictions associated with COVID in 2020 shut down travel for a little while, but even after those restrictions lifted, new dangers have kept our teams away.

Haiti has experienced extreme political turmoil since the assassination of their president, Jovenel Moïse, in 2021. Since then, there has been no reliable government in the country. Instead, warring gangs have sought to control whatever they can.

This instability has kept many who desire to help the people of Haiti, including us, from sending teams. Despite our physical absence, our relationship with World Wide Village and the people of Haiti has continued. Two of our elders, Jeff Thompson and

Dave Kirk, regularly meet online with Haitian pastors for teaching, counseling, and encouragement. Grace has recently supported World Wide Village with direct contributions for the purchase of food and other essentials. And many have been praying.

Now, we want to alert you to a new opportunity to serve the body of Christ in Haiti. Because of the gang violence and significant turmoil in the country, many Haitians are leaving their homes to seek safe spaces. One of these places is the community of Luly, on Haiti's West Central Coast. Though there has been gang violence around this area, Luly has remained relatively calm. As a result, Luly's population has swelled as families flee kidnappings, violent crimes, and civil unrest. One of the most urgent needs from the influx of families is more classroom space.

Offering consistent school is difficult in Haiti under good circumstances. Holding classes seems impossible with war, chaos, and ever-present gang violence. But World Wide Village is committed to making education accessible for the boys and girls in the areas they serve — including Luly.

Grace is partnering with World Wide Village to build up Luly's local schools, expanding them so all children, both locals and refugees, can continue growing and learning. We ask you to consider helping meet the financial needs to expand Luly's schools.

Throughout December, we will talk about this opportunity on Sunday mornings and in our regular communications. Then, on December 24, we invite you to give a special offering to support schools in Haiti. You can do this by bringing checks written to World Wide Village or by visiting their website: worldwidevillage.org. All donations will go to improving the school infrastructure in Luly and supporting World Wide Villiage's gospel work.



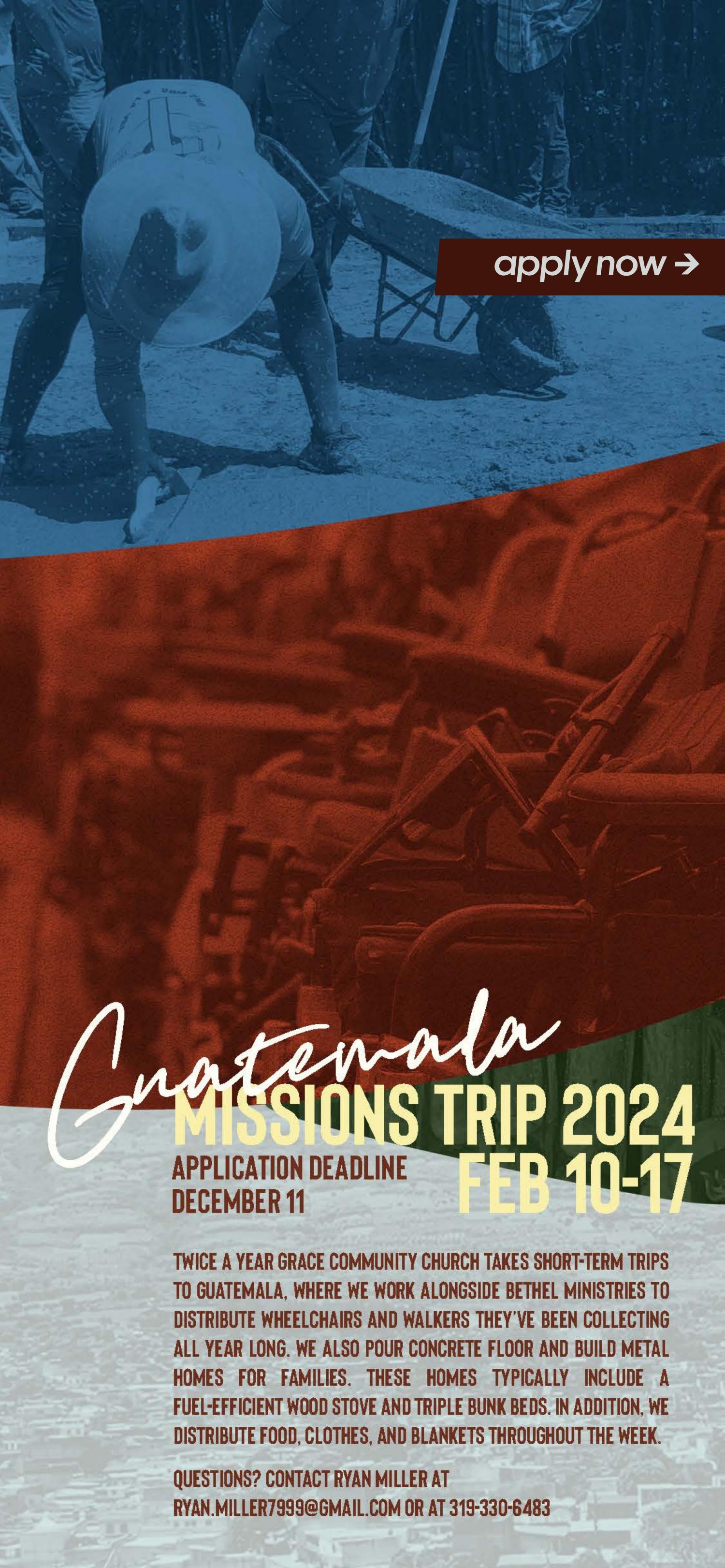
DEC 8 • 7-8:30PM REGISTER AT GRACEB3.ORG/EVENTS

'Twas the Night: The Story of Christmas and Our Stories Regarding Christmas.

Celebrate the season with the Women of Grace and invite a friend! We will gather for a relaxed time to encourage, worship, and learn. Enjoy an abundant buffet of refreshments*, good conversation, and make a seasonal craft.

Let us know you are coming - register today! *gluten-free options will be available.





CLASSES START JAN 21

register here

