

[Reluctant Faith](#)

[How to Disciple Children with Godly Wisdom & Support](#)

[Baptism at Grace](#)

[How to Purposefully Celebrate Easter with Children](#)

# HOW SHOULD WE WAIT FOR JESUS' RETURN?



GRACE INSIDER

MARCH 2024



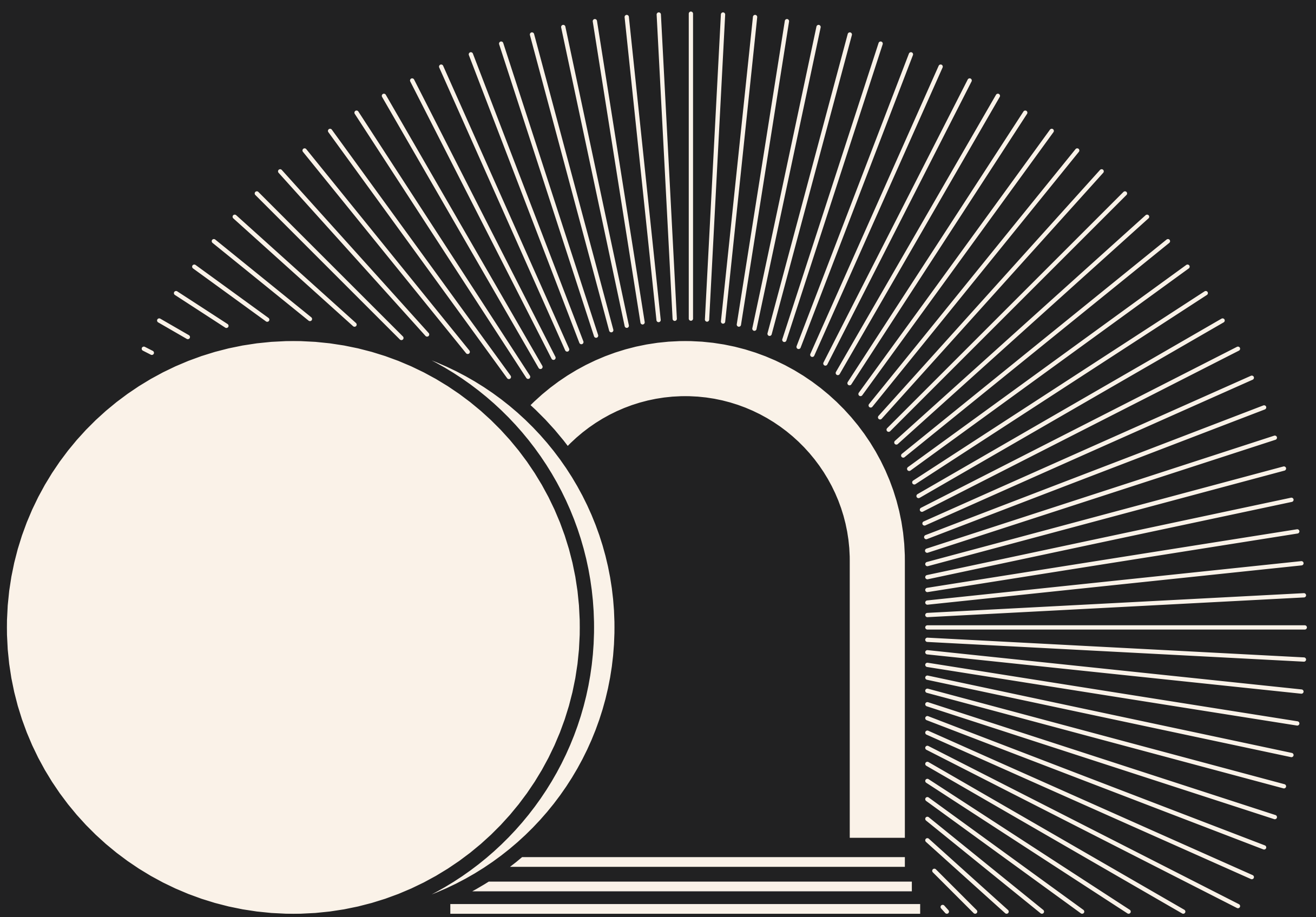
# GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE

6:30PM

# EASTER SERVICES

SATURDAY 5PM

SUNDAY 8:30 & 10:15AM





# volunteer fair

**The best way to connect  
is to get involved.**

Whether it's welcoming visitors,  
playing in the worship band,  
helping in kids' classes, in the  
parking lot, or at the soundboard,  
everyone can serve.

Current volunteers and ministry  
leaders will be on hand to explain  
options and answer your questions  
about the many opportunities to  
be involved at Grace.

Stop into the gym after either  
service!

**April 21  
9:30am & 11:15am  
In the gym after each  
service**

## ***Questions?***

*Contact Ryan McFadden,  
Volunteer Engagement Director,  
ryanm@graceb3.org, (319) 626-2040*



# UPCOMING EVENTS

Learn more and/or sign up for events  
by tapping on the events or visit  
[graceb3.org/events](http://graceb3.org/events)



## steadfast

A Devotional Bible Study on the Book of James  
morning sessions

## GOD OF CREATION

A Study of Genesis 1-11  
evening sessions



baptism

**MEN'S  
MARCH  
MADNESS  
BRACKET  
PARTY**



**TOP TO BOTTOM** Steadfast a women's study on Friday mornings begins 3/1 • **God of Creation** a women's study on Tuesday evenings begins 3/5 • **Baptism Class** 3/17 & 24 • **Men's March Madness Bracket Party** join anytime between 11am-10pm on 3/21





# BIBLICAL SOUL CARE

## WEEKEND EDITION



# SHARE THE GOOD NEWS

## OF EASTER WITH THE WORLD



# membership class



 THE MISSIONS COURSE  
A PROGRAM OF AIRD

# THE MISSIONS COURSE

# volunteer fair

apr 21

**TOP TO BOTTOM** Biblical Soul Care Weekend learn biblical answers to life's struggles on 3/23 • International Student Easter share the gospel with an international student on 4/6 • Membership Class 4/14 • The Missions Course Discover your God-given mission on Sundays 4/14-5/19 • Volunteer Fair Find ways you can serve on 4/21





# Parenting Roundtables

*Learning How to Disciple Children with Godly Wisdom and Support*

*By Next Gen Director Cindy Sulwer*

**PARENTING IS ONE OF THE MOST REWARDING YET CHALLENGING JOURNEYS IN LIFE.** It's a constant learning experience, filled with moments of joy, frustration, and everything in between. As parents, we often find ourselves seeking guidance and support in navigating the complexities of raising children in today's world. This is where parenting roundtables come in! They offer valuable opportunities for parents to come together, share experiences, and grow in their journey of raising children with godly wisdom and strength.

The quarterly parenting roundtables provide a unique space for parents to **connect with others facing similar struggles, creating a community of support and understanding.** By coming together, we realize that we are not alone in our challenges.

One of the most significant benefits is the opportunity to actively learn and grow together in our quest to biblically disciple our children. **By leaning on God's strength, wisdom, and power, we dig into real-life scenarios, using the word of God as our guide.**

The roundtables also serve as **a safe haven where parents can seek wisdom and support without fear of judgment.** This nurturing environment encourages open dialogue and fosters a sense of trust, enabling us to share our vulnerabilities and uncertainties.

It's often said that it takes a village to raise a child, and the parenting roundtables embody this sentiment. As parents, we need to be dependent not only on Christ but also on one another's support. Through shared experiences, biblical guidance, and a supportive community, these roundtables provide a helpful resource for parents to navigate the complexities of parenthood with wisdom and strength. Here's what a few of our parents had to say about why they come to the roundtables:

### **CARRIE WOLFORD**

Parenting is both more wonderful, and harder, than I expected. And as a sweet friend recently reminded me, hard is not the same as bad. However, if I didn't have people to remind me of truths like that, I would drown. The parenting round table has been so helpful because parents gather to speak truth, ask questions, and encourage one another. **We remind each other that we are not alone no matter what**

**stage of parenting we are in.** I have brothers and sisters walking in my same shoes, some a few steps ahead and some a few steps behind. And at every parenting roundtable I've attended so far, I am **filled with the refreshing truth that the gospel is good news for parents, it's good news for me because my kids need me to need Jesus.**

### CATHY STANGE

I have loved the parenting roundtables. **At 60 years old, I am never too old to learn and grow.** Once a parent, always a parent, as they say. The group has provided a safe place to share, ask questions, and gain support. Very much a blessing.

### WADE & SARAH GUTIERREZ

We have really appreciated the chance to get to know other parents and discuss with them various topics related to parenting from a biblical perspective. The times we have been able to attend have been very **encouraging and helpful** in thinking through how we can be faithful in pointing our kids to Jesus, while letting them see how much we need him, too! 🌿



backyard bible club 2024  
coming soon

# happy Campers

SPEND YOUR SUMMER WITH GOD

**volunteers needed**

interested? contact Natasha at  
[natasham@graceb3.org](mailto:natasham@graceb3.org)







[REGISTER HERE](#)

# BIBLICAL SOUL CARE

## *WEEKEND EDITION*

3.23 | 8AM - 4:30PM

4.20 • 5.18 | 8:30AM - 4:30PM

*\* Bring your own lunch or pay \$35 to have lunch catered at all three meetings.*

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.





# R E L U C T A N T F A I T H

BY LEAD PASTOR BROOKS SIMPSON

**YEARS AGO, I WITNESSED A FATHER ATTENDING TO HIS SQUEALING FOUR-YEAR-OLD.** It was December; everyone was leaving a Christmas concert for elementary kids. This little girl had touched her tongue to a metal handrail. She was crying and trying to talk without using her tongue. As her dad tried to calm her down, he dropped the classic dad line,

*“Daddy told you not to put your tongue on the rail, or it would freeze.”*



We relate to that story as the parent, the child, or both. Apparently, human beings can hear instruction and even agree to apply it, but when real life happens, our actions demonstrate we either did not hear or, more than likely, we never believed what we heard the first time.

One of the biggest surprises surrounding the accounts of Christ's resurrection is the fact that the disciples were surprised. Every time someone heard a report of the resurrection, they refused to believe it.

*"She went and told those who had been with him, as they mourned and wept. But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it. After these things he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them. Afterward he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at table, and he rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen."*  
Mark 16:10–14

It's not like they weren't told beforehand. Mark records Jesus telling his disciples explicitly that he would be killed and rise again bodily in Mark 8:31-32, 9:31, 10:32-34, and 14:27-28.

It would be understandable if Jesus spoke about his impending death and resurrection in allegories, riddles, and parables, but Mark makes sure we understand Jesus spoke plainly.

*"And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him."* Mark 8:31–32

We read the passages, and in hindsight, we wonder how they could be so dense. How did they not see this coming? How did they lose hope when



Jesus told them again and again he would rise and conquer death? Well, why does a four-year-old put their tongue on a metal post in the dead of winter when their dad clearly told them what would happen? **Why do we fail to trust God in a thousand other applications where we know what he says yet fail to obey? The answer is unbelief.** Mark shows us the disciples did not believe Jesus. They heard the words coming out of his mouth; they just didn't believe them.

How could death be the key to life?

How could defeat be the key to victory?

How could yielding to evil be the means by which evil is crushed?

How can losing your life be the key to gaining it?

How can giving away everything be the way to gain?

How can being made poor be the key to being made rich?

Do we believe Jesus' words? We think we do. Then we find our tongues frozen to a post during the dead of winter. Turns out we are not much different than the disciples. We are reluctant believers. The object of our faith (Jesus) is rock solid but the faith itself is weak. It is only strengthened through adversity. **We have to experience death before we can experience the resurrection, regardless of what we have been told ahead of time.**

There is hope. The same disciples who fled, hid, and refused to believe the reports concerning the resurrection are the same disciples who fearlessly took the gospel to the ends of the earth. This Easter, let the Spirit strengthen your reluctant faith. 🌿





# 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](https://graceb3.org/baptism) or on the app.

*March 17 & 24*  
*8:30am*

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



*And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."*

*Acts 1:10–11 (ESV)*



*By Lead Pastor Brooks Simpson*



*Don't just stand there!*

That's basically what apostles heard from the angels 40 days after the resurrection. Jesus had given them their marching orders, and they stood there looking up into the sky to where Jesus had just ascended. Standing. Watching. Wondering. When will he come back? It is a fair question. People have been asking since the ascension. Sometimes I am asked if I think we are in the end times. I always answer the same way.

Absolutely. The end times began when Jesus ascended into heaven. His return is imminent, and he could return at any time.

My response is for the most part unsatisfying as the question is more about how current events fit end time scenarios: Israel at war, political unrest, moral anarchy, earthquakes, famine, etc. People are curious. Is this it? Is the end near? When? Is it now? If you are watching and wondering when, you are in good company. Jesus' disciples wanted to know, too. Forty days after the resurrection, Jesus' disciples are asking, "Is it time?"

***So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Acts 1:6 (ESV)***

In his first sermon, Jesus said, "*Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand.*" For three years, he preached and healed. Then he died and rose. It is only natural to ask, "So when are you establishing the kingdom?" Jesus shows them the more important question is what they should do as they wait.



*He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Acts 1:7–8*

Jesus tells them three things. First, the timing is none of your business. Second, you are to wait until you receive the Spirit. Third, once you are empowered – witness. To witness is to testify to the truth. Testify to what you have seen and experienced. Testify in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the end of the earth. **Whenever Jesus taught on the end times, his emphasis was always on what his servants should do as they waited.**

Jesus wanted them to know he would send his Spirit so they would be empowered to witness, or testify, to the gospel. He doesn't want us standing there looking and waiting. He wants us to witness. So, as we wait, we have a choice. We can just stand here looking, wondering, waiting, or whining about how the world has gone to hell in a handbasket, or we can **be obedient, be empowered, and be witnesses to the power of Christ.**

Jesus will return. He could return before you finish reading this sentence, or he could return a thousand years from now. **The only relevant question is whether we will be found faithful upon his imminent return.** This spring, following our Mark sermon series, we will begin a study on the Book of Acts. Our goal is to apply what we learn and see, not just standing there with a profession of faith, but being empowered and witnessing to the end of the world and to the end of the age. 🌿



# membership class

april 14 • 10:15–11:30am

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





*By Executive Pastor Josh Haveman*

# BAPTISM AT GRACE

WHEN AN ATTENDER AT GRACE WANTS TO BE BAPTIZED, that person is encouraged to sign up for our baptism class. The class takes place over two weeks. The first session introduces the concept of baptism and articulates why someone would be baptized and what the practice does and does not accomplish. The second class gives individuals the opportunity to develop a written testimony that can be shared when the baptism takes place.

Unless the person being baptized has a personal plan that includes being baptized in a home pool, at a nearby lake, etc., they are placed on a list of persons who are ready to be baptized. The baptism class is held every three to four months. Baptisms held at the church usually take place a few weeks to a month after each round of classes.



We ask that everyone who is baptized at Grace share their testimony so that the congregation can hear about how God has worked in their lives. We also ask them some questions while being baptized to make clear that while everyone is a sinner, we all have access to hope in Jesus, God's son. Our preferred method of baptism is immersion (the whole person goes under water).

### **WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?**

Everyone who has placed their faith in Jesus Christ should be baptized. In Matthew 28, when Jesus sends out his disciples to share the good news of salvation with all of the world, he commands them, saying: *"go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you."* (Matthew 28:19-20)

### **DO YOU BAPTIZE INFANTS?**

We believe that Scripture teaches that **baptism is an outward sign of an inward change.**

Colossians 2:12 says that when we have faith that Jesus saves us from our sins, baptism is a way to show other believers that we recognize we are symbolically buried with Christ and raised to new life in Christ. As infants and very young children are not capable of placing their faith in Christ with full comprehension, we have taken the stance that a person must be old enough to express genuine faith before being baptized. Typically, this means that people baptized at Grace are no younger than about ten years old.

### **WHAT IF I WAS BAPTIZED AS AN INFANT?**

If you were baptized as an infant, and are following Jesus faithfully, you can be an active participant in church life at Grace Community Church. You cannot be a member, though. We ask that all of our members be baptized as an adult (see below). This is not meant to be a criticism of your faith. There



are many people who are baptized as infants that have a vibrant faith and are engaged in many church activities. However, because we believe that God calls us to demonstrate our faith in him through baptism, it is possible that someone at Grace might ask you to consider being baptized as an adult if you were only baptized as an infant.

## **WHY DO GRACE MEMBERS NEED TO BE BAPTIZED AS ADULTS?**

Jesus commands his disciples to baptize new believers as an outward sign of the inward change that has taken place in their lives. Because infants are not capable of recognizing an inward change in their lives, Grace considers infant baptism to be an insufficient response to Christ's command. That doesn't mean the ceremony wasn't valuable to your family, or important to the church that you or your children were born into. But, at Grace, we believe the testimony of an adult witness is necessary for a right response to Christ's command. And because Christ chose baptism as the sign to mark people who have placed their faith in him, Grace asks that all who join the church as members be marked with the sign that Christ chose as well.

*For some, that will be enough explanation. For others, this feels like a very complicated issue. If you or your children were baptized as infants and have reservations about being rebaptized as adults, please consider talking to one of our elders about your concerns. 🙋*



support & encouragement in disciplining your kids

# PARENTS ROUNDTABLE\* SERIES



**APRIL 7 8:30 OR 10:15AM**

Parents, you've heard us say "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](mailto:cindys@graceb3.org)

*\*no registration required*





*By Children's Ministry Lead Coordinator  
Natasha Miller*

# *Celebrating Easter with Your Children*

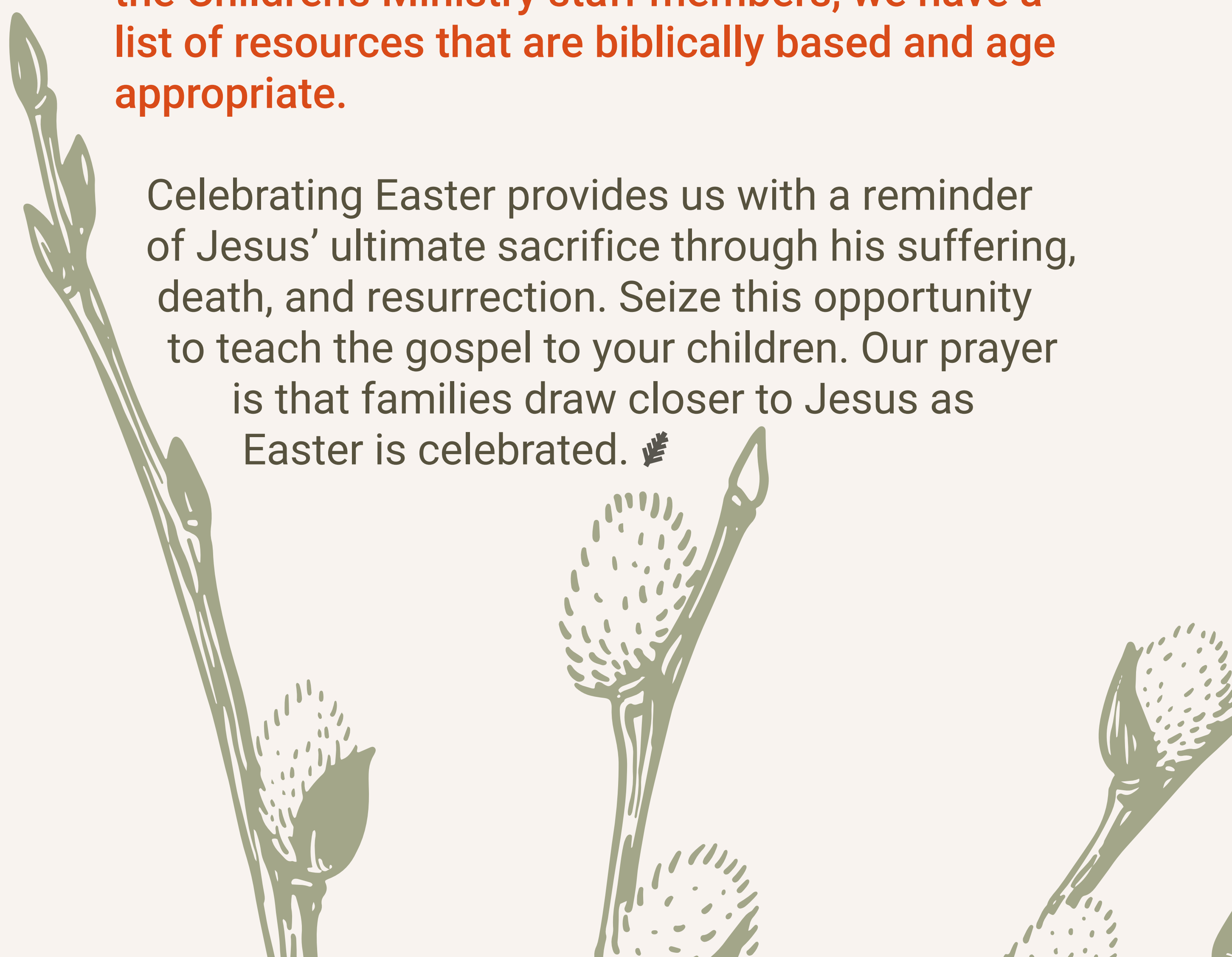


**AS PARENTS WE KNOW THAT THE IMPORTANCE OF EASTER CAN OFTEN BE OVERSHADOWED** by egg hunts, bunnies, cute outfits, and baskets full of goodies. This year, let's purposely prepare for the day by being intentional as Easter approaches.

The heart of Easter is the miraculous resurrection of Jesus. This historical event puts God's love on display and is the foundation for our Christian faith. Celebrating Easter provides an opportunity to share this powerful message with our children, instilling in them the hope that comes from the resurrection.

**When our kids were young, we loved using Resurrection eggs.** I would pull them out several weeks before Easter and the kids would have fun opening them to see what was inside and what part of the Easter story it represented. We would also have times when we sat down and went over the whole story, opening all the eggs in order. I have found that using **simple resources like this makes being purposeful easier.** Think through the traditions your family already has surrounding Easter and use those as springboards in sharing the truth of Jesus' death and resurrection. Remember, it doesn't have to be elaborate; simple traditions can be effective. **If your family needs help knowing where to start, reach out to one of the Children's Ministry staff members, we have a list of resources that are biblically based and age appropriate.**

Celebrating Easter provides us with a reminder of Jesus' ultimate sacrifice through his suffering, death, and resurrection. Seize this opportunity to teach the gospel to your children. Our prayer is that families draw closer to Jesus as Easter is celebrated. 🌱







# **HOPE FOR THE JOURNEY**

## **SIMULCAST CONFERENCE**

*Training & Encouragement for  
Foster & Adoptive Families*

**Friday April 5 • 9am-5pm**

**Cost: \$10** *Lunch and snacks provided. Please choose your lunch option during registration.*

**Questions?** Contact Natasha at [natasham@graceb3.org](mailto:natasham@graceb3.org)

**No childcare provided during the conference.**

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





# Good Friday and Easter

*By Worship Director Zack Stanton*

**THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT WEEK IN ALL OF HISTORY WAS THE WEEK OF JESUS' DEATH AND RESURRECTION.**

It was the culmination of his earthly ministry and the moment all of the Hebrew Scriptures had been building toward: the Suffering Servant would set the captives free, call the spiritually dead to life, and lead them in victory as adopted children of God. He would undo what was done in Adam and Eve's sin, dying as the atoning sacrifice for all mankind, bearing their sin, absorbing God's wrath, and rising from the dead as the first among all God's people to be resurrected to a glorified body. This victory would turn the world upside down and initiate a slow, unstoppable change that would alter the course of human history.



We love to celebrate Easter — it's truly the best holiday in terms of what it means for Christians. It's usually celebrated with triumphant music, bright colors, good food, our "Sunday best" clothes, and family. And all of that is appropriate!

**But we couldn't have Easter if we didn't have Good Friday.** Jesus came to die. He declared that reality over and over again to his disciples. He knew his ultimate mission when he asked John the Baptist to baptize him. He knew it when he ministered to the needy around him. When he taught crowds of people. When he was in the Garden of Gethsemane and felt the crushing weight of that mission. He knew he must bear the sin of the world and take it to the cross.

We are going to hold a Good Friday service at Grace this year to ponder the death of Jesus together. I do not say "celebrate" because it is hardly a celebration. It will be **a time to lament the suffering of Jesus, to lament our sin that sent him to the cross, and to lament the brokenness of the world that is so painfully present around us.** We will read through the passion narrative of the gospels, sing of the purpose and nature of Jesus' death, and take communion together, which Jesus inaugurated just hours before his crucifixion.

But this hour of lament will prepare our hearts for Easter in a powerful way. As we often say of the gospel, **we have to know the bad news before we understand the good news.** Many have pointed out the irony of calling it "Good Friday" when the events of that day are anything but good. What he accomplished, however, is good beyond comprehension. Easter doesn't hold much meaning if it's only about the food, the clothes, and family. It holds enormous meaning if it demonstrates God's mercy toward us and represents our transition from judgment to forgiveness, from slavery to freedom, from death to life. When we take time on Good Friday to consider Jesus' suffering and



**we have to know  
the bad news before  
we understand the  
good news.**

lament the brokenness we see and experience around us, then the glory of Easter Sunday is magnified. Our joy will be deeper because we've taken the time to meditate on the context of the resurrection. We see our hope more clearly.

**Please join us for the Good Friday service on March 29 at 6:30pm.** I know it will enrich your faith and deepen your love for Jesus as we set our hearts and minds on him together. Then come back on Easter and let's celebrate his victory with a renewed gratitude for his sacrifice! 🌿

***Easter Services will be on Saturday at 5pm, Sunday at 8:30 and 10:15am.***





# **MEN'S MARCH MADNESS BRACKET PARTY**

**MAR 21 • SIGN UP AT  
[GRACEB3.ORG/EVENTS](http://GRACEB3.ORG/EVENTS)**

Men, join us for our annual Men's March Madness outing! It's a great time to watch basketball, meet new people, eat, and win prizes. Fill out a bracket and bring a friend, coworker, neighbor, or your kids. We will have an area reserved at Buffalo Wild Wings in Coralville from 11am - 10pm on Thursday, March 21. Come out for lunch, appetizers, happy hour, dinner or evening snack, or join us for the whole event. (Yes, some of us are there for the whole time!) There will be a trophy and a \$50 BWW gift card for the winner of the bracket challenge! Sign up and let us know you're coming!