



CHOOSE TO
BELONG
→

**THRIVE CLASSES
2024 CATALOG**



**MISSIONS EMPHASIS
WEEK PREVIEW**



**WHY WE VOLUNTEER IN
THE CHILDREN'S MINISTRY**



HAPPENINGS

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

ALL-CHURCH POOL PARTY

Everyone is invited to this all-church, all-ages pool party! Feel free to invite your friends and neighbors. No sign up required, just come! August 4 | 6-9:15pm

GSM PARENT MEETING

[details to come]

BBC AT DEERFIELD PARK

Kids age 3 through 6th grade are invited to learn about the adventure of living life with God! Free to attend. August 4-7 | 6:30-8pm

GSM BACK TO SCHOOL BASH

Join Grace Student Ministry as we get ready for the school year by having one last night of games and fun at our local community center! August 17 | 7-9pm

more on next page

GSM REFILL

Grace Student
Ministry's weekly
meetings resume on
August 21.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY RESOURCE TABLE

Get resources that
help you disciple the
next generation! Find
us in the foyer after
services on August 25.

Why We Volunteer in Children's ministry

By Lead Children's Ministry Coordinator Natasha Miller

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY SERVES A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF GRACE, AND THAT REQUIRES MANY PEOPLE TO SERVE TOGETHER TO MAKE IT HAPPEN. If you've been around for even a short time, you've heard pleas for more people to fill open serving slots.

Instead of telling you how important it is to have people who love Jesus and are willing to give of their time, let's let some of our current volunteers tell you why they serve. I hope this speaks to you and encourages you to begin serving somewhere, and if Children's Ministry (Nursery through 6th grade) is where you would like to be involved, please contact Natasha, natasham@graceb3.org.



TOM & GLENDA WIDMER

“Let the children come to me...”
Mark 10:14

Surveys reveal 83% of those who make a decision to become followers of Jesus do so between ages 4-14. Ministry with children is a big deal. It is being a part of their foundation and demonstrating for them the truth of the Savior who loves and pursues them. It helps them make the choice to follow truth and not be compromised by the ever-changing world they live in. There is great satisfaction of being part of the beginning of that journey.

“What a joy to teach minds that are impressionable with eyes that sparkle at the truth of Scripture.”

We made a decision early on to always have a ministry that we shared. We cut our

teeth on working with children when we first became followers of Jesus, and that passion has never died. Other ways of serving are important, but **what a joy to teach minds that are impressionable with eyes that sparkle at the truth of Scripture.** I really believe we sometimes do church thinking that ministry to children is an 'add-on' instead of essential. We get to be a part of their journey; a part of letting them know they are special and are loved; a part of modeling Jesus that makes them desire to turn their life over to him. It also allows us to be young again for a brief period and see Jesus through a child's eyes. It's an investment in the kingdom with a great return. That is why we serve.

KRISTI ROTZOLL



God has given us all spiritual gifts in order to serve him and bring him glory. I have a heart for kids and have found through trial and error that I also have a spiritual gift of teaching. It has taken me many years of serving in different roles within Children's Ministry to discover my spiritual gift and find pure joy in serving.

I first started serving in the nursery, and while many diapers were changed, very little joy was found. While you all have beautiful babies who should be cherished, God just didn't give me a heart for cherishing them. I then moved to the toddlers and preschool-aged classroom. Again we have a lot of super cute toddlers in our church, but every Sunday that I served, I left frustrated with a headache and very little joy. I honestly didn't see the point in serving when it was so painful. **I continued to pray and knew that God could use me.**

Luckily, the Children's ministry did not give up on me (or they couldn't find any other volunteers) and I decided to try working with the older kids. There, I found pure joy in serving Christ! These past ten-plus years teaching the first through fourth grade classes at Grace have been amazing.

Teaching encourages me to be in God's word regularly; after all, you can't teach what you don't know. It has also allowed me to share the gospel and explain the need for the Savior every Sunday. Thinking back to my childhood years in Sunday School, it makes me sad that I was never taught the importance of having a relationship with Christ. I have made it my weekly mission during second service classes to share the gospel. To explain that we are all sinners, but we don't have to be sad

or embarrassed about our sin because Christ loves us so much that he died for us. God's word never returns void, and I am so glad he has given me the opportunity to serve in a way that uses my gifts and brings him the glory he deserves.

Tim & Dawn Stultz



I (Tim) teach the 5th/6th grade Sunday school class for many reasons. I recognize myself at that same age, where I had big questions and doubts about my faith, but I could not seem to find the answers.

I went to a church that had strong teaching from the pulpit, but little discipleship, mentoring, and training on the foundations of the faith and the deeper issues. Those things just weren't being taught to kids that young. Fear of having wrong answers or the appearance of weak faith made me try to fake it until I could make it.

After playing the part of a good Christian kid through junior high and high school, I stopped pretending in college and failed miserably. The Lord did finally call me into real faith in graduate school. I recognized that **had someone walked me through those questions or asked deeper questions at a younger age, perhaps things might have been different.**

Once redeemed, I saw that God used those things I went through to mold and equip me to challenge and answer those big questions that the world throws at kids just like me. My hope is that through strong yet fun teaching on foundational doctrine they can see their need for Christ, accept the gift of salvation he is offering, and walk in a personal faith in him.

In a nutshell, I (Dawn) love God and I love these kids. **I have a passion for teaching the next generation about Jesus because I want them to know his truth and his deep love for them so they can be his ambassadors in this world.** Kids are confronted with a lot of different worldviews. When they are grounded in Scripture, they are more able to distinguish God's truth from what the world is telling them. It is exciting for us when we see kids wrestle with the deeper questions and then the 'light goes on' and they understand who Christ is and what he has done for them. 🌿

IGNITING

the LOVE of
CHRIST in the
NEXT GENERATION



recruiting GSM volunteers

interested? email Brian at brianh@graceb3.org



EVERY TRIBE, LANGUAGE, PEOPLE, & NATION!

By Executive Pastor Josh Haveman

Missions Emphasis Week, 9/22-29, is a week of events and opportunities calling attention to missions work and workers. The theme for this year is “Every Tribe, Language, People, and Nation” from Revelation 7:9.

SEPTEMBER 22

The **kickoff** for this year's Missions Emphasis Week will be the regular Sunday service on September 22. A staff pastor will speak about the events of Missions Emphasis Week, and the message and music will highlight missions and missionaries.

SEPTEMBER 25

Wednesday, September 25, Grace Student Ministries will invite the entire congregation to a missions presentation. The presentation will include **testimonies from international students in our own community** and a Q&A about how people of every age can share the gospel with international students. Our field staff partner, Wade Summers, will also be on hand to answer questions and share about his work. Please consider attending that night to hear about how God is working through international student ministries.

SEPTEMBER 28

Then, sign up for the **missions dinner** at Grace on Saturday evening, September 28, 5-7:30pm. Our partners with JLife — missionaries in Africa — will give a presentation and we will worship together with musicians from local Hispanic and African congregations. There's no cost for this event and childcare will be provided (advance registration required). Look for the registration link in our weekly church emails and on graceb3.org/events.

SEPTEMBER 29

We will wrap up Missions Emphasis Week on Sunday, September 29. John Abrahamse, our missionary/field staff, will bring the morning message, and following the service, we invite all of you to the gym for our annual missions fair. Plan to visit with dozens of local, national, and international missionary partners. 🌿



family sit-together

5.26 – 9.1

All children from kindergarten and up will join their parents for the worship service beginning May 26 through Sept 1.

Classes will remain available for nursery through Pre-K children.

Questions?

**Contact Natasha at
natasham@graceb3.org**

STUDENT MINISTRY UPDATE

BY STUDENT MINISTRY DIRECTOR BRIAN HAGEDORN

SUMMER IS WRAPPING UP! WE'VE HAD A GREAT SUMMER FILLED WITH GREAT STUDIES FROM VISUAL THEOLOGY AND SEVERAL SPECIAL EVENTS FOR STUDENTS TO HANGOUT, INVITE FRIENDS, AND ENJOY SPENDING TIME MEETING NEW PEOPLE.

REC NIGHT

We're preparing for our end-of-summer event Rec Night, on **August 17th from 7-9pm at the North Liberty Rec Center**, and we would love to see any and all 7th-12th grade students there!

REFILL STARTS UP THIS FALL

We are finalizing all the details to get ready to start Wednesday night Refill and excited to start seeing everyone consistently again. We'll form new life groups and get to know each other while studying God's word, praying for one another and building lasting relationships! **We're excited to start with a series on biblical community: what it is, how it looks, and what role it plays in the life and spiritual growth of believers.** We'll follow it up with a series on the core values and spiritual disciplines of a disciple of Jesus, before jumping into our studies on specific books of the Bible and other topics that our students are facing every day in the culture.

PRAYERS FOR THIS SCHOOL YEAR

We have been praying for our leaders, students and their families, and are asking God to work in all of our lives to deepen our love and devotion to him, to his word and mission, and to each other. I invite you to join us in prayer and **ask God to change the lives of our students** — that the power of the gospel would spread into their schools, their families, and to the ends of the earth, and that God may be glorified and many would come to know him. 🙌



CHOOSE TO BELONG

**"I THEREFORE,
A PRISONER
FOR THE LORD,
URGE YOU TO
WALK IN A MANNER
— WORTHY OF
THE CALLING TO
WHICH YOU HAVE
BEEN CALLED."
EPHESIANS 4:1**

By Lead Pastor Brooks Simpson

HOW DOES A CHRISTIAN “WALK IN A MANNER WORTHY OF THE CALLING” WE HAVE RECEIVED? WE NEED THE HOLY SPIRIT, WE NEED THE BIBLE, AND WE NEED PRAYER. BUT WHAT ABOUT THE CHURCH? IS IT REALLY ALL THAT NECESSARY? THAT DEPENDS ON HOW WE VIEW THE CHURCH.

HOW DO YOU VIEW THE CHURCH?

There are two ways to approach this question. The first is to strain out what you think the question is fishing for. The other is to answer according to your gut. Does it feel necessary? Is it like water, as in you have to have it to live? Or is it like Chick-fil-A, as in you enjoy what it provides, but you could live without it?

How you answer depends on what you believe the church is and why it exists. How would you answer this question: Where do you go to church?

- A. I go to Grace Community Church in North Liberty
- B. I go to Grace Community Church in Iowa City
- C. I go to another local church
- D. I don't go anywhere
- E. I don't understand the question

Chances are pretty good you answered A-C.

You “go to church” in one location or another. If you answered “D” – *you don’t go to church at all* – I’m surprised you’re reading this right now. Did anyone choose “E” – *I don’t understand the question?* – I bet not.

We understand the question because our understanding of church has more in common with a Chick-fil-A than it does the New Testament view of church.

Webster’s first definition of church is, “a building for public, and especially Christian, worship.”

Do you know who would select “E” in our multiple-choice question? Anyone who was a part of the early church. They would hear the question and think the questioner was nuts. The Greek word translated church is *ekklesia*. It means the called-out ones. It always refers to a group of Christians or an assembly of people. Those who are called out of the world to follow Christ. **The church was not a place, it was a group of people.**

If the church is a place, then we can take it or leave it. The average attender gathers with other Christians 1.5 times a month. And, attending church 1.5 times per month sounds completely reasonable, if the church is a place where we get good teaching. But if it’s

just that, we're better off staying home and downloading a nationally known preacher. The teaching is probably better, and we won't have to leave the house. Like Uber Eats or DoorDash, it has some qualities of spiritual food without the hassle of leaving the house or interacting with people.

But if the church is a people and not a place, that changes everything. You may think you can do without those messy people you see at the gathering of the church, but you would be wrong. You're avoiding what Jesus died to make you a part of — the church. **You belong to those messed up, but redeemed, people and they belong to you.** The best expression of God's love for us and our reflection of his glory in our lives is done with each other.

Jesus did not conquer sin and death to give

"A NEW COMMANDMENT I GIVE TO YOU, THAT YOU LOVE ONE ANOTHER: JUST AS I HAVE LOVED YOU, YOU ALSO ARE TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. BY THIS ALL PEOPLE WILL KNOW THAT YOU ARE MY DISCIPLES, IF YOU HAVE LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER." JOHN 13:34-35

us a range of spiritual fast-food options we can consume alone on our couches. He died and rose again to graft us into his body, the church, his called-out ones. We not only have a place at the table but also a place to help in the kitchen because that's how the world will know we follow Jesus. If we are to walk in a manner worthy of the calling we have received in Christ, we need each other.

This fall we will begin a new sermon series called *Choose to Belong*. Our text will be Ephesians Chapter 4 where Paul teaches why we need each other to grow up into Christ. In parallel, small groups will discuss an accompanying Bible study designed to help us understand the importance of biblical community. 🌿



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 here](#)

*Sept 1 & 8
8:30am*

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

FALL 2024 CATALOG

THRIVE CLASSES

**“All Scripture is
breathed out by God
and profitable for
teaching, for reproof,
for correction and
for training in
righteousness, that
the man of God
may be complete,
equipped for
every good work.”
2 Timothy 3:16-17**

By Spiritual Formation Pastor Dave Kirk

AT GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH WE STRIVE TO GLORIFY GOD BY MAKING DISCIPLES WHO MAKE DISCIPLES.

We do that through focusing on our core values. One of our core values is being people of God's word. We strive to be people who highly value not only hearing biblical truth but also people who highly value living out that truth in our daily lives. This is why we offer Thrive classes every fall and winter.

Thrive is a collection of classes designed to bring together people who come to Grace in an interactive, fun, friendly environment where **hearing biblical truth and being equipped to daily live out that truth** comes together. If you have been at Grace long enough, you have heard us refer to Thrive as a tool shed. Thrive is where you can **get the next tools to mature in your faith, live in biblical community, and confidently and boldly share God's love with those around you.**

There is a Thrive class for everyone! No matter where you are in your relationship with Christ, there is something here for you. Our Thrive classes are generally categorized into two sections: Christian living and leadership development. Each section offers different classes to help you grow.

We encourage you to invest in your spiritual life this fall and winter by signing up for a Thrive class. The fall Thrive semester will **begin Sunday, September 22, and will run through November 24**. Some classes are ten weeks long, some classes are shorter. See below for the course listing for the fall semester:

8:30AM CLASSES

Practical Disciple Making

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 principles, practical tools, and practice experiences as you pursue others to multiply your life.

Teachers: Scott Heemstra/Austin Ward

Coed Bible Study Workshop

This interactive class will teach you how to study the Bible in a meaningful way, no matter how much or how little you know about it.

- The three steps of sound Bible study
- Weekly practice and Q&A
- How different genres influence interpretation
- The roles of the Holy Spirit and prayer in Bible study
- An overview of the Bible and its story

We will provide a Bible, but you may bring a Bible with no study notes or commentary if you have one. We will also provide weekly worksheets for note taking, group work, and individual work.

Teachers: Jean Keeley and Carrie Wolford

Marriage: 6 Gospel Commitments Every Couple Needs to Make

Based on Paul Tripp's book of the same title, this class is designed for married couples and for those who may be contemplating marriage. Whether you are stuck in your marriage or just need a tune-up or refresher, we encourage you to come to this class. You will be encouraged and given tools to help the gospel become more central in your marriage.

Teacher: Rick Wyss
Cost: \$10

The Redemption Story of God, from Genesis thru Revelation

This class is Part 2 in our Bible Foundations series. It equips you to understand how the Bible, made up of 66 individual books, is unified from Genesis to Revelation. You will see Christ's redemption story from beginning to end.

Teachers: Jacob Varvel/Peter Chidister

10:15AM CLASSES

Growing in Christ

- *"I really want to grow in Christ but I am not sure how."*
- *"I am a newer Christian so what do I do now?"*

If you find yourself saying either of these two statements 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 living out your faith. This is a must for those who want to grow in Christ.

Teachers: Dave Kirk

Grandparenting Matters

This class is designed to encourage and equip Christian grandparents by teaching biblical principles that will inspire you to leave a legacy of faith to your grandchildren. Grandparenting Matters will help you overcome obstacles, equip you with practices to implement in passing on your faith, and provide a strategy to reach the hearts of your grandchildren.

Our desire is for you to be awakened to the role that no one else in your family can fill. God designed you to be a spiritual influencer to multiple generations.

Teachers: Tom & Glenda Widmer

Cost: \$12 for the book

Visual Theology: Guide to the Bible

for middle and high school students

Have you ever wondered how the Bible was written or how it was put together? In this Thrive class, we will talk about those questions and others while we explore the Bible and how it all points to Christ.

Teachers: Brian Hagedorn & GSM staff

11:30AM CLASS

Premarital Counseling Class

This class is for couples who are preparing for marriage or who never had premarital counseling. We will look at all aspects of God's design for marriage and give biblical evaluation tools to help you determine if you are ready to be married. This is a fun interactive class that will help you evaluate your relationship and help you grow deeper in your walk with Christ and community.

Teachers: Dave Kirk

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