

GRACE INSIDER

JANUARY 2025

Confessions of an Intentional Christian Grandparent

FOCUSED GIVING UPDATE

THE BODY NEEDS YOU

GSM WINTER RETREAT

WINTER THRIVE PREVIEW

HAPPENINGS

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

GSM REFILL RESUMES

Grace Student Ministry resumes on Jan 8 from 6:30 – 8pm at our North Liberty campus. A time for 7th–12th graders to refill!

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WINTER THRIVE CLASSES

THRIVE is our twice-yearly slate of equipping classes for adults (and teens too).

Classes begin Jan 19.

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GSM WINTER RETREAT

Students, join us for a fun weekend on Jan 24–25 with peers, friends, and leaders! We will learn more about Jesus and living for him in our culture through games, worship, large group sessions, and breakout teaching sessions! Snacks and food provided. Let us know when you sign up if you're coming for one day or both days.

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VOLUNTEER FAIR

Stop by the volunteer fair after each service and learn where you can help! 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.

Feb 2 • 9:30am & 11:15am

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!

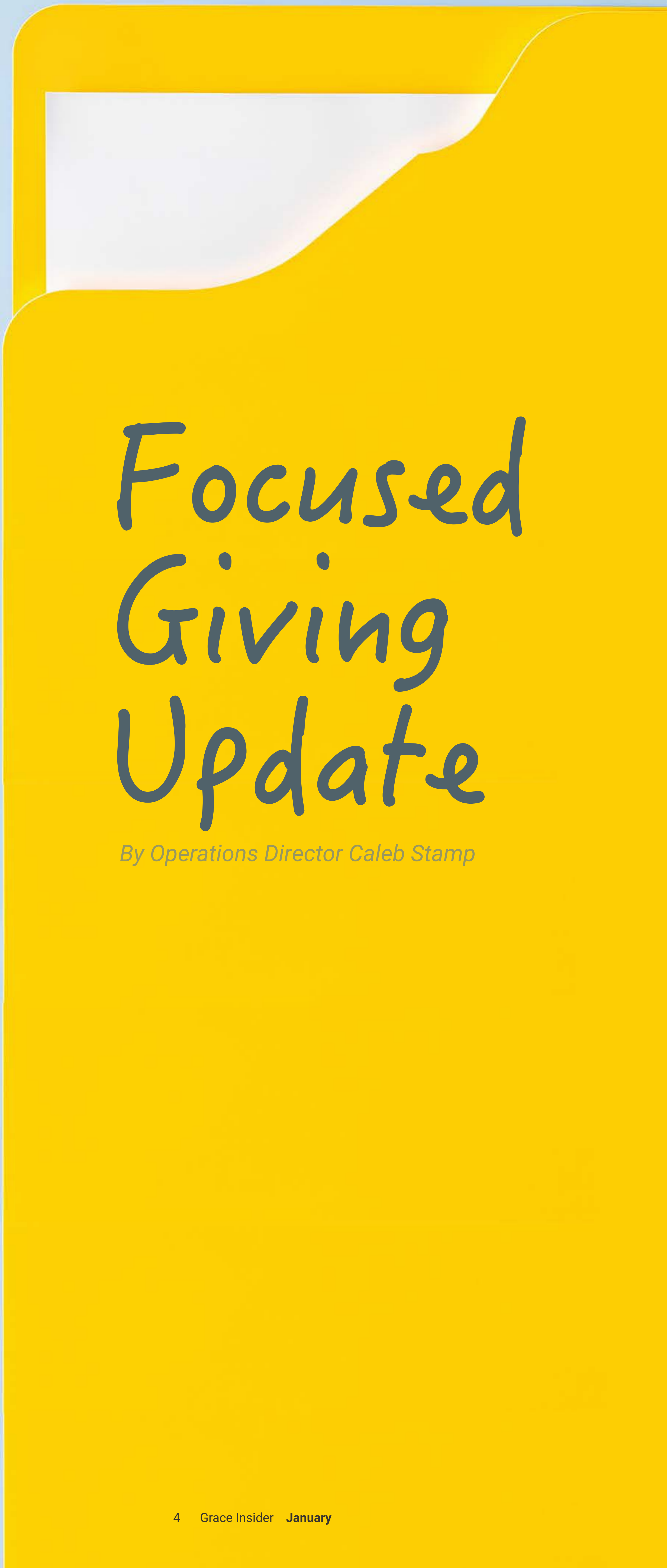
Feb 2

9:30am & 11:15am

**In the gym after
each service**

Questions?

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



Focused Giving Update

By Operations Director Caleb Stamp

FOCUSED GIVING IS OUR ONGOING INITIATIVE TO SPUR FORWARD MINISTRY WORK AND GODLY FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP.

It's made up of opportunities for you to go beyond your regular contribution to Grace to make a specific, tangible, and immediate kingdom impact toward particular ministry opportunities.

We've recently updated the focused giving projects on graceb3.org/focus. If you haven't visited the website yet, here's a listing of those projects you can help support.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS

Goal: \$5,000

Amount raised to date: \$0

We want our facility to be more welcoming and accessible to those with special needs. Funds donated will be used toward the purchase of an adult-sized changing table, as well as other accessibility-related improvements to our restrooms.

COUNSELING SCHOLARSHIPS

Goal: \$3,000

Amount raised to date: \$0

Sometimes, a couple or individual needs critical care in the form of multi-day biblical counseling intensive, or other specialized care outside the walls of Grace Community Church. However, the cost is an obstacle for many who need this help. This fund provides scholarships to alleviate that burden so that these couples/individuals can focus fully on healing in Christ during this time of intensive care.

EXTENDING GRACE - BACKPACKS AND SCHOOL SUPPLIES FOR FOSTER FAMILIES

Goal: \$3,000

Amount raised to date: \$300

'Back to School' is a time of year when families spend a lot of money preparing for school. Extending Grace plans to provide new backpacks and school supplies to over 180 families this year. Help Extending Grace to alleviate some of the financial burdens for these families.

EXTENDING GRACE - FOSTER FAMILY ENCOURAGEMENT

Goal: \$3,000

Amount raised to date: \$260

Support foster families by offering opportunities for them to bond and grow together. Funds donated will support events including renting the North Liberty pool to offer a free pool night twice in the winter, training for foster parents in the spring, as well as other fun family activities throughout the year.

EXTENDING GRACE - GROCERIES FOR FOSTER FAMILIES

Goal: \$4,000

Amount raised to date: \$1,044

Receiving a new child into your home results in many logistical pieces that need to align, as well as bonding between the parents and child. Extending Grace provides grocery delivery for these families to ease their time of transition.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY BACKYARD BIBLE CLUBS

Goal: \$500

Amount raised to date: \$500

Your gifts will help our summer Backyard Bible Clubs host block parties so families can see what their kids have been doing all week.

NEXT GEN BIBLES AND RESOURCES

Goal: \$1,700

Amount raised to date: \$275

We would love to provide Bibles for any child or student without one or who can not afford one. These Bibles and resources are offered during outreach events and also for our students in the various Next Gen ministries.

SHORT-TERM MISSIONS SCHOLARSHIPS

Goal: \$2,000

Amount raised to date: \$0

Twice each year Grace commissions teams to minister to the people of Guatemala in partnership with Bethel Ministries. Scholarships will be used to help make it possible for individuals at Grace to attend who otherwise would find the financial costs overwhelming.



Simulcast Legacy Grandparenting Summit • 2025

Learn more or register at graceb3.org/legacysummit

Feb 22, 2025 • 9am – 4:30pm

Doors open at 8am • Grace North Liberty

Rate* varies by sign up date:

\$29 Oct 1–31 • \$34 Nov 1 – Jan 31 • \$39 Feb 1 – 22

**Cost includes conference handbook,
lunch, and refreshments*

EXPERIENCE THE ONLY NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CHRISTIAN GRANDPARENTING!

Gather with other Christian grandparents for this simulcast from Birmingham, Alabama, hosted by Grace Community Church. It is designed for grandparents who desire to be intentional and develop a spiritual legacy. You'll receive wisdom and direction from an incredible line up of speakers, and find spiritual inspiration through music and worship.

This year's conference theme is "For This Purpose" and will empower grandparents to embrace their divine purpose and the crucial role they play in their families' spiritual journey.

The Legacy Grandparenting Conference is for you if...

- You want to see your grandchildren follow Christ
- You desire to leave a lasting legacy of love
- You want to influence generations of your family for Christ

You'll also learn about the grandparenting ministry at Grace Community Church.

GSM WINTER RETREAT 2025

By Student Ministry Director Brian Hagedorn

Each year, GSM hosts a Winter Retreat for our students in grades 7-12. We are so thankful for all the adult leaders and volunteer parents who make this event happen. It is one of our favorites, and we are grateful to God for the fruit we get to see from this event. The retreat is a two-day event consisting of times of worship, large-group teaching, small-group breakout sessions, and (of course) great food.

IT IS FINISHED

This year, the theme is “It is Finished.” Even as followers of Jesus who intellectually know we were bought at an incredibly high price, it’s easy to forget what Christ Jesus’ work on the cross means. God’s love for us was displayed when Christ went to the cross. And if you are in Christ, there is no more payment to be made. There is nothing you can do to prove that you deserved this gift, and there is no way for you who are in Christ to sin enough to wriggle out of Jesus’ hands. It is finished. We hope our students internalize and abide in this truth.

LIVING LIKE, AND FOR, JESUS

The fact that it is finished (and he is risen!) does not mean that we stop putting in effort to do good work. Those who are in Christ are now set free to live like and for Jesus. The difference is that followers of Christ Jesus are living from grace, not for salvation.

At this year's Winter Retreat, we will discuss both the powerful work of Jesus Christ on our behalf and what that means for how we live the rest of our lives. In our breakout sessions, we will discuss how it is finished, so: we are set free to **Rest**, to **Forgive** and **Receive Forgiveness**, to **Be Salt and Light** in a sin-darkened world, and to **Be a True Image Bearer**. We invite you to pray with us that the retreat empowers all who attend to live their lives for Christ out of the grace they have received.

We hope to see many of our students on January 24 and 25! For more details and to register your student, please visit [*graceb3.org/events*](https://graceb3.org/events).

We would love to have a Prayer Team praying intermittently before and during the event. If you are interested in being a part of that team, contact Lizz at [*lizzh@graceb3.org*](mailto:lizzh@graceb3.org). 🌿



THE BODY

NEEDS



YOU

*By Volunteer Engagement Director
Ryan McFadden*

THE SON OF MAN
DID NOT COME TO
BE SERVED, BUT
TO SERVE, AND TO
GIVE HIS LIFE AS A
RANSOM FOR MANY.

MATTHEW 20:28

The role of 'servant' is no longer common in our culture, but the idea of 'service' is still everywhere. And in truth, a servant is a person who freely uses their time, resources, and abilities to serve others.

Being a disciple of Jesus means a great many things, one of which is involvement in faithful service. As we follow him together, we desire to see everyone engaged in community, laboring alongside each other for the gospel.

We want to help you use your God-given gifts and talents to glorify the Lord, both within the church and in your community. You will both be blessed and also bless others through your service. And, serving in a church community is not only rewarding but also vital. Many of our programs and activities would not be possible without individuals serving within our church.

You might look around on Sunday morning, see that everything runs just fine, and figure that you aren't needed to serve. You may feel like you need more useful skills or believe nothing would fit into your already busy schedule. But none of those things are true. You are a valuable and important part of the body of Christ, and God has made you to be in community.

AND IF THE EAR SHOULD SAY, “BECAUSE I AM NOT AN EYE, I DO NOT BELONG TO THE BODY,” THAT WOULD NOT MAKE IT ANY LESS A PART OF THE BODY. IF THE WHOLE BODY WERE AN EYE, WHERE WOULD BE THE SENSE OF HEARING? IF THE WHOLE BODY WERE AN EAR, WHERE WOULD BE THE SENSE OF SMELL? BUT AS IT IS, GOD ARRANGED THE MEMBERS IN THE BODY, EACH ONE OF THEM, AS HE CHOSE.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:16–18

WHERE CAN I FIND THESE SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES?

One great first step is the Ministry Fair on Sunday, February 2, after both services. Check out different ministries, meet folks who are already serving, ask questions, and let them know if you might be interested. Afterward, a ministry leader will contact you to meet and discuss the opportunities in more detail and help you decide what type of service best fits your strengths

and availability. Trying out a few different ministries can also be a way to find the best fit and discover your gifts.

Ministries you'll see at the fair include Children's Ministry, Student Ministry, Guest Services, Coffee, Music and A/V, Outreach, and more.

The goal for the Winter Ministry Fair is to share opportunities to serve and prepare for the spring semester. The people of Grace Community Church need each other to serve in a variety of ways both during Sunday services and also the rest of the week.

IF I DO NOT SEE AN OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE OR MISS THE MINISTRY FAIR, WHAT CAN I DO?

Please feel free to contact me, Ryan McFadden, Volunteer Engagement Director, at ryanm@graceb3.org. I would love to meet you, listen to your questions, and help you find your place to serve as part of Grace Community Church.

Please take your next steps toward volunteering to help build up our church body. And if you are already actively serving, thank you! Everyone plays an important part within the body of Jesus Christ. 🌿



It is finished.

**GRACE STUDENT MINISTRY
WINTER RETREAT 2025**

For 7th – 12th graders • 1/24–25
Sign up by 1/15 at graceb3.org/events

Students, join us for a fun weekend with peers, friends, and leaders! We will learn more about Jesus and living for him in our culture through games, worship, large group sessions, and breakout teaching sessions! Snacks and food provided. Let us know when you sign up if you're coming for one day or both days.

Confessions of an Intentional Christian Grandparent

By Pastor Tom Widmer

I am learning and relearning many things as I focus on the task of being intentional in building a Christ-centered legacy for my grandchild (and my child). Here are just a few of the lessons from a growing list of insights I believe God has given to me.

1. I am not the parent.

My child rightly exercises primary responsibility for the raising of my grandchild. My biblical responsibility is to assist by being a "Christ-like support." Harm will come if I try to exert my opinion and influence when it is not asked for. I need to see myself as a part of the family, but lovingly know my role.

2. Intentionality takes planning

Being intentional means I cannot just expect it to happen - I need a plan! I must keep my eyes on Jesus each day and not get distracted. How can I pray better? What does my grandchild need? How can I build a better relationship? What things do I need to do to demonstrate the truths of Jesus so my grandchild will give Jesus first place in his life?

3. Listen

I need to be a better listener. Yes, I am skilled at guiding a discussion to what I think is a problem and how to fix it, but many times that is not the need. The primary need might be to be valued and understood. My words and advice may be sound, but it will not be accepted unless my heart is sensitive to the words and emotions my grandchild presents. What he may need in that moment is my touch and expression of caring. Lord, grant me the wisdom to know when to listen and when to speak.

4. Vulnerability

I must truly be vulnerable and never project myself 'error-free' because I am far from that. Every day my grandchild is presented with the false notion that others 'have it all together' and are living so much better than him. Through social media, he sees perfect influencers, surrounded by perfect things, living perfect lives. In comparison, my grandchild sees in himself flaws that make him feel less valuable. Through my influence, stories, and examples, my grandchild needs to see himself as created in God's image and dependent on only him for his righteousness. I must lead with grace. I need to look for ways to communicate to him that I love him unconditionally. Anything he might do or doesn't do will never change my love for him. This needs to be more than words. It needs to be a self-sacrificing example of how I live my life before him. Yes, he might disappoint, embarrass, or break my heart, but that does not change my love for him.

Do any of these 'lessons' resonate with you? I encourage you to join the Grandparenting Ministry at Grace Community Church. You will be with others who desire to make a difference in the lives of their grandchildren. Check out the church webpage to learn more. I also encourage you to join us for the "2025 Grandparenting Summit" simulcast hosted at Grace on February 22. Go to www.graceb3.org/summit25 for details and to register. 🌿



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](#)

*March 2 & 9
8:30am*

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

By Spiritual Formation Pastor Dave Kirk

WINTER *preview* THRIVE

Our winter Thrive session is kicking off very soon, and we couldn't be more excited. The classes offered this semester will help equip you to grow in your walk with Christ and give you valuable tools to use along your discipleship journey. No matter where you are in your walk with Christ, there is something here for everyone this winter. To help you decide which Thrive class to take, we've included instructor bios for each class.

Scott Heemstra and Austin Ward

Practical Disciple Making

8:30am • Rm 306

Scott (and Paige) Heemstra are on staff with Navigators and are part of our missions team. Along with ministering to college students at the University of Iowa, they also lead one of our community groups. Scott is a gifted teacher and communicator who is passionate about discipleship and equipping Christians to effectively disciple others.

Austin (and Lauren) Ward have spent several years as long-term missionaries in Malaysia and are part of Grace's missions team. Like Scott, Austin has a huge heart for the gospel, discipling others, and seeing disciples equipped to make disciples. Austin brings many great perspectives to discipleship.

[View details about Scott and Austin's class here](#)

Jacob Varvel and Peter Chidister

Walking With God Through Pain and Suffering
10:15am • Rm 201

Jacob Varvel and his family have been at Grace for over ten years. Jacob serves as our Communications and Connections Director, and he (and Linda) have led several community groups. Jacob has a deep love for Jesus, the word, and people. Jacob brings a sincere heart and a curious mind to his teaching that helps bring out the truth of God's word.

Peter Chidister and his family have been members at Grace for over ten years. Peter, like Jacob, is a newer teacher on our Thrive teaching team. Peter brings a passionate heart for Jesus and discipleship to his teaching. Peter is very thoughtful, cogent, and deliberate as a teacher. Peter also serves as a volunteer in our student ministry.

[*View details about Peter and Jacob's class here*](#)

Dave Kirk

Growing in Christ
8:30am • Rm 307

Premarital Counseling Class
11:30am • Conference Room

Dave has been a pastor at Grace for 15 years, and he currently serves as the Pastor of Spiritual Formation. Dave is the Co-Founder and Director of the Eastern Iowa Biblical Counseling Coalition, a ministry to numerous churches in Iowa that assists pastors and leaders in building shepherding into their church's discipleship models. Dave's heart is to see people grow to know and understand their union with and identity in Christ, to ignite them to live joyfully with and for Jesus daily.

[*View details about Growing in Christ here*](#)

[*View details about Premarital Counseling here*](#)

Brian Hagedorn and Grace Student Ministry Team

Visual Guide to the Bible Part 2

10:15am • Rm 304-305

For middle and high school students

Brian and Liz Hagedorn have led the Grace Student Ministry (GSM) for the past ten years. The Hagedorns have surrounded themselves with a team of lay leaders to build into the students of our church. The GSM team has a huge heart to share Christ with our middle and high school students. They're accessible to our students and they seek to help students apply God's truth to their lives.

[*View details about Visual Guide to the Bible Part 2 here*](#)

REGISTER FOR A
THRIVE CLASS HERE