

400 East Ave, Rochester, NY 14607

# 2023

## Annual Report

Grace Road Church



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# A letter from Kevin

2023 flew by. This year, Grace Road was blessed in some ways we never could have predicted.



More people professed a new faith in Christ this year than I can remember. We heard story after story of people coming to believe and follow Jesus. We saw it demonstrated in dozens of baptisms, we heard about God's work in lives through our Advent testimony videos, and it was a thrill to have front-row seats in observing God's grace to us.

This year, we saw a big surge in people serving to help local ministries, more prayers for our missions endeavors, and some gave months of their lives to overseas missions work. God has also blessed with new additions to our staff and eldership. The continued growth of our church required us to convert one

of our last remaining spaces into a kids classroom and a few world-class volunteers converted some closet space into offices, so nearly every inch of our facility is now being used. Our giving exceeded our budget, we remained debt-free, and we gave away more resources to missions, ministries, and church-planting than ever before.

We, of course, also experienced some setbacks and disappointments. We had hoped to convert a large basement space to a classroom, but water and other issues have made that impractical for now. Great members of our church moved away and other key leaders experienced tragedies and sickness in their families. Some of our members went on to be with the Lord: a loss for us but a gain for them. In any given year, a church's life will be characterized by being "sorrowful, yet always rejoicing (2 Cor. 6:10)," and 2023 was no exception.



In 2024, we are facing many great opportunities, as well as key challenges. We have an opportunity to expand our staff and ministries, to further increase our giving toward missions, take our first large-scale missions trips (to El Salvador and perhaps Scotland), and support new ministries (like the Seed Company, a Bible translation endeavor that is affiliated with Wycliffe). We also face real challenges: a facility that is full, some leaders that are tired, and leadership structures straining under the weight of such a large and fast-moving church.

Our hope in 2024 is to overhaul a couple of our top-level leadership structures and systems, solidify and expand our eldership, and elaborate on our ministry philosophy so that we can do a better job leading the church and providing pastoral care. With some help from the outside, we hope to fortify Grace Road's operations for the church and leaders alike, simplify our organization, and clarify to our members how community, care, service, and mission work together at Grace Road.

On the personal side of things, our family is doing well. The kids are all following the Lord and love Grace Road. Lydia is a sophomore in college at Grove City where she is an R.A. and involved in her church, in Younglife, and too many other things to list. Sophia is finishing her senior year of high school with an eye toward nursing in the future. Isabelle is a sophomore and loves serving in missions. And Hudson is a freshman, with a number of options for his future. They all serve in the kids ministry and all four will be on staff at Camp Hickory Hill this summer, Lord willing. Debbie is, as usual, devoted to our family, to ministry at Grace Road, to her Grow Group, and to (pray for her) keeping me sane. She remains a rock.

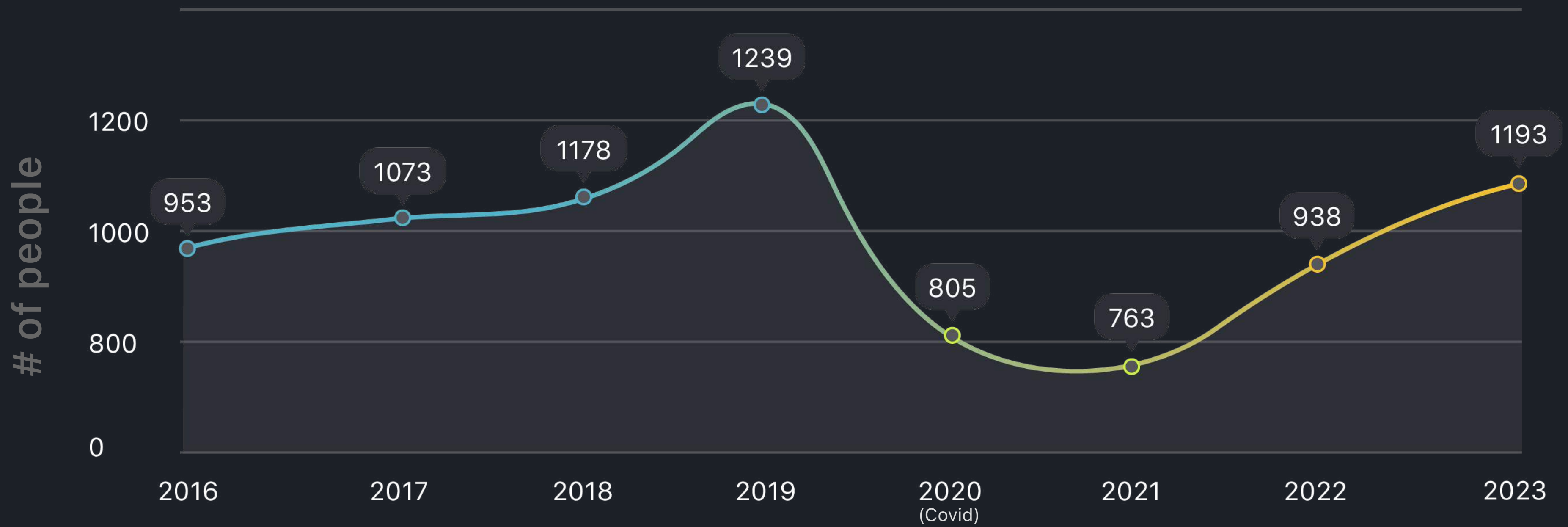
If 2024 is anything like 2023, we will see more unexpected and undeserved blessings from the Lord, along with amazing victories and painful disappointments and losses. Even still, we will look back and say that the Lord was with us and for us in it all. I'm so glad to be on this ride with all of you.

Peace,  
-Kevin Maloney,  
Lead Pastor

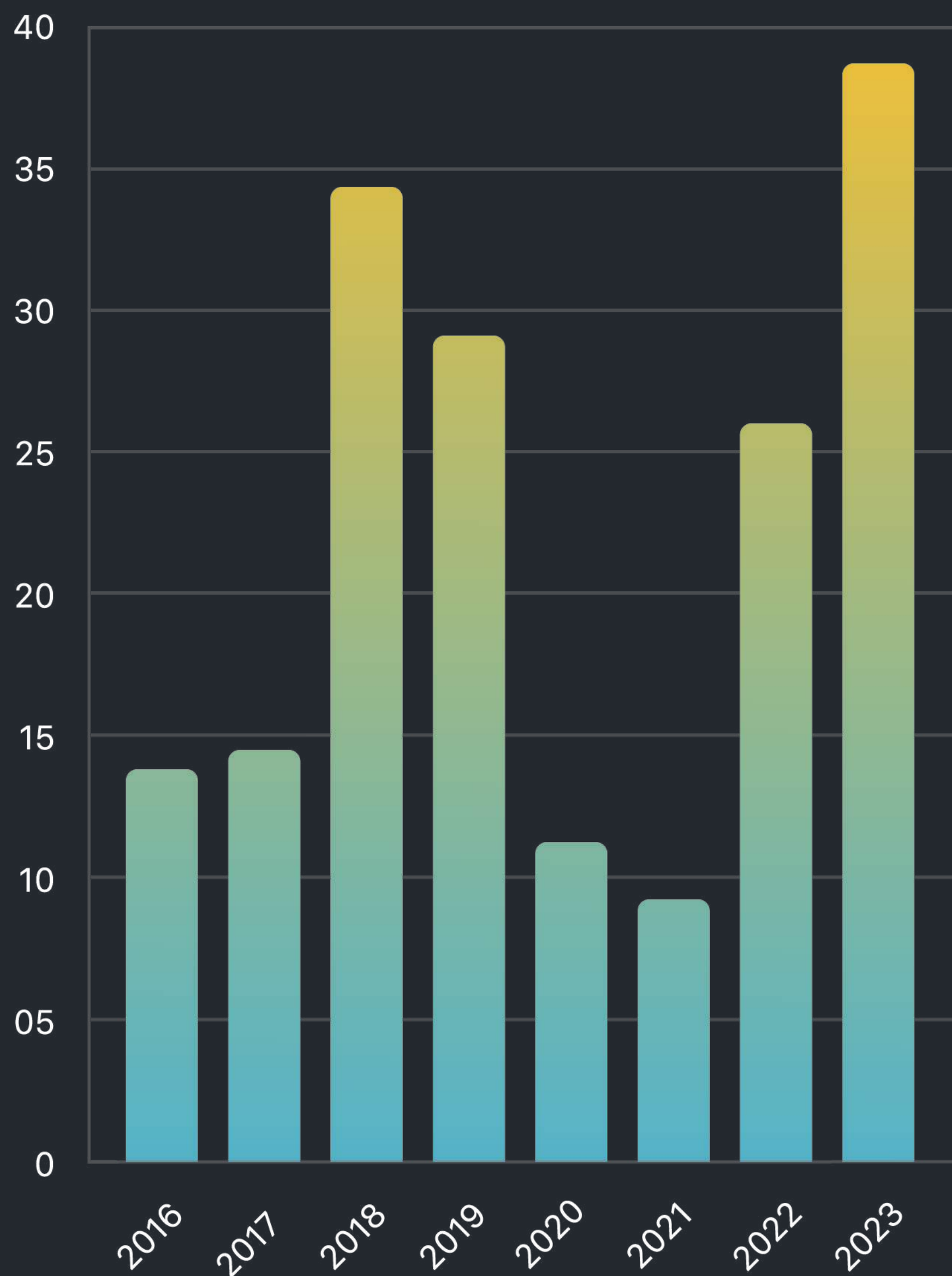




## Attendance



## Baptisms



## Membership

**74**  
new members





# Sermon Series

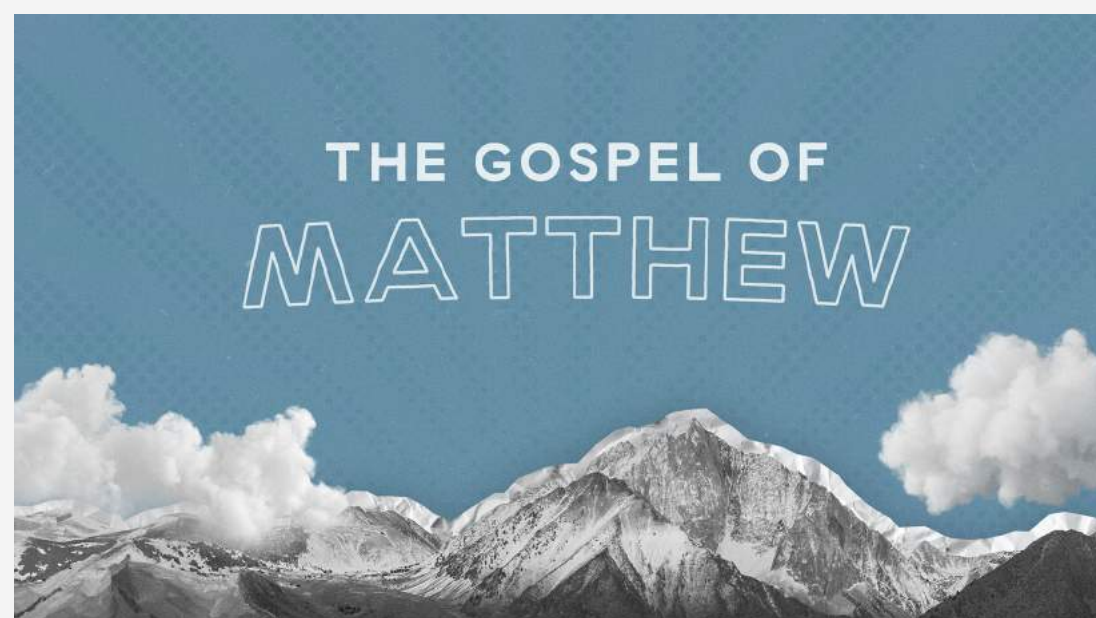
2023 brought us through seven different books and sermon series.



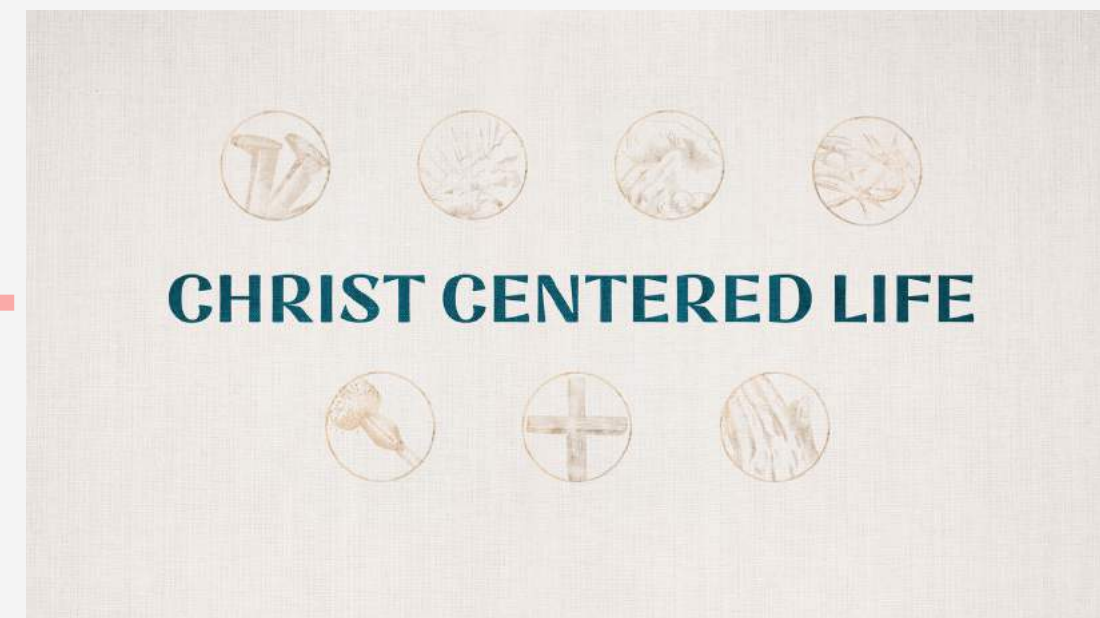
**Galatians**  
Sept 2022 - March 2023



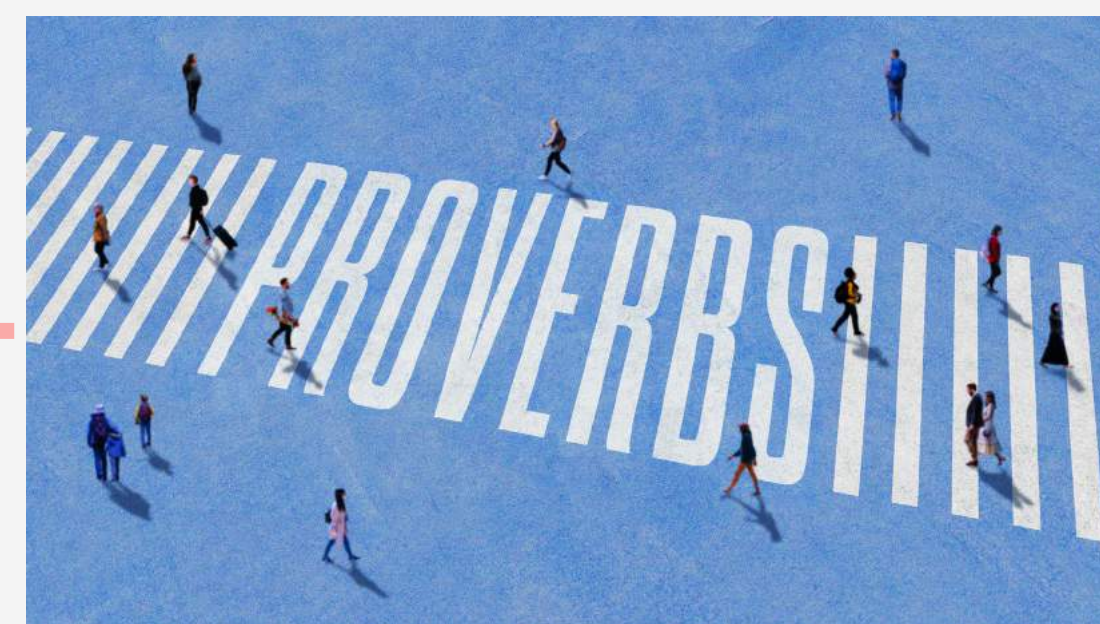
**Job**  
April - June 2023



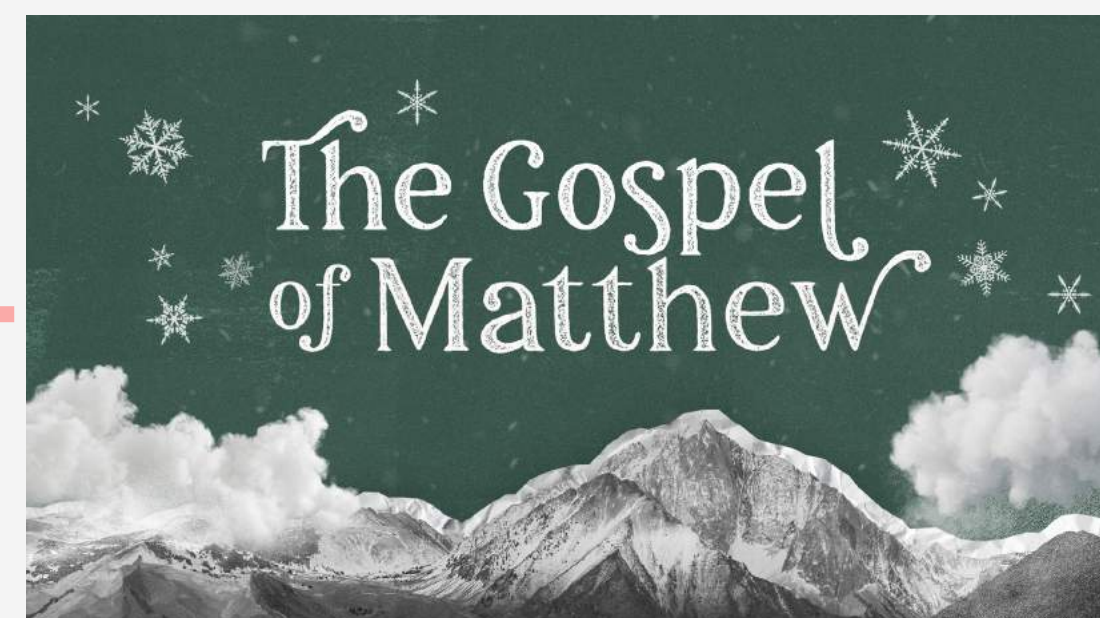
**The Gospel of Matthew**  
September 2023- Present



**Christ Centered Life**  
March 2023



**Proverbs**  
June - August 2023



**The Gospel of Matthew (Advent)**  
December 2023

## Advent

One of our favorite yearly rhythms is to share stories from God's people when we are celebrating the birth of Christ. Three stories from members of our church, the Kugler family, Kelly Lee, and Nikkye DePoint, put God's glory on full display. We are thankful for their encouragement and transparency in sharing how God works through ordinary and miraculous means.

Missed the Advent videos?

[Watch them here](#)





## Missionary Spotlight

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### Testimony from Scotland

"2023 in Scotland was a whirlwind! We have seen growth in our church plant; it is small but faithful. Our Scheme has been impacted by a drug called fentanyl, which has brought some difficulties. It is hard ministering to people and seeing them waste away physically because of their addiction.

Our Church family is a continued blessing, with a passion for mission and showing the care of Christ. Our vision is that we will be 'A local church for local people with a local leadership.' The area I am going to focus on in 2024 is the Local leadership part. We are raising up leaders and training them this year."

-Chris Davidson,  
Merkinch Free Church in Scotland

[Learn more](#)

To see more from the missionaries Grace Road supports, visit: [www.graceroadchurch.org/missions](http://www.graceroadchurch.org/missions)



# Grow Groups

In 2023, our men's and women's Grow Groups met for 36 weeks to study *Life Together* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the book of Isaiah, a study on Repentance, and *Delighting in the Trinity* by Michael Reeves. Groups of men and women around the area met weekly to pray, memorize scripture, serve the local church, confess sin, and study the Scriptures together.

"Our group has been meeting for some time and it has been really beautiful to see the growth of the lives of our members. It can take a long time for guys to open up, but this feels like proof that if we are open to the work of the Spirit and are willing to be faithful, God will bring the growth. During a recent meeting, one of our members said, "I have been a Christian for 39 years but have never confessed sins to another person. In this group, I finally feel I can." There's nothing magical about getting a group of guys together but there is something so miraculous about the God's work in the hearts of sinners who know they have been saved by grace."

— Rusty PagenKemper,  
(Men's Grow Group Leader)





“Ever since I joined my Grow Group in 2020, I’m always eager to share with people about how it has changed my life. It has been one of my greatest life blessings.

The three and a half years leading up to Grow Group were full of isolation and trial for my family. Although I was full of fear and anxiety, I knew I needed to join some type of Gospel-centered community. When I looked up the groups, I saw a familiar leader name pop up, (Nicole Dumas)!

I reached out to her and asked if her group was open, and she immediately replied yes with excitement. I remember the first night driving to grow group being scared to death and asking myself “What on earth am I doing!?” I was terrified to walk into her house. The thoughts that ran through my mind were “Will I fit in?” “Will I ever feel comfortable with this group of ladies?” and “I’ll never be able to memorize scripture!” Fears and doubts ran through my head. As soon as I walked in the door, I was surrounded by warm smiles and open arms. In all my life, I have never felt so much unconditional love and support. Whenever there is a need, the group is there for one another, praying and providing any tangible needs. I have never seen the gospel lived out so clearly in a group before.



Group has also deepened my faith in many ways. Group has provided the accountability I need to be in the Word each day. My eyes have been opened and understanding deepened to the indescribable love and compassion that Christ Jesus has for us. The beauty and richness of the gospel has become even more real to me. When I walk into church on Sunday mornings now, I see familiar faces and feel more connected to the church. And that’s because of Grow Group! I am really thankful for this.

Our leader Nicole has been the most wonderful leader. I tell people all the time that her leadership and service in our group has altered my life in the best of ways. And many others too! God brought her to me at the time I needed it most and little did I know of the great plans that He had. If it was not for Nicole and my Grow Group, I truly believe I would be stuck in the dark place I was in. I have been part of many Bible studies and groups in my life, and none of them were like this one. This ministry is a gift and a blessing to so many people. I encourage everyone to think about joining one!”

— Nicole L.  
(Women’s Grow Group Member)



# Men's Ministry



This year saw even more men gathering together to build closeness among brothers in the faith. This year, our men's ministries **continued to grow by nearly another 50%**.

We are now trying to figure out how to accommodate even more people into the Wanda Room. What a wonderful problem to have! It has been a great year of building connections and seeing those connections extend into life.

This year also saw **new teachers** for our men's prayer breakfast. Bruce Plummer, Chuck Mancini, and Zach Hanje have joined Kevin and Cody in pursuit of encouraging the men of our church. It is heartening to look towards the next year as we seek to make more room around the table for men in our community to come closer to Christ.



# Midlife Group

## Midlife Group:

The Midlife group began in order to provide an opportunity for “midlifers” (ages late 40’s to early 60’s) to connect, share, and encourage one another as we walk through this stage of life.

In 2023, the majority of events were Saturday morning light breakfasts which offered a mixture of fellowship and encouragement from God’s Word. Additionally, we have gathered for game nights and a wonderful bonfire in the fall.



As one person shared after an event, **“I feel so blessed by the midlife group. I feel understood and challenged to keep growing”**. Our prayer is that this ministry will help midlifers know they aren’t alone and enable them to relate to others through the new experiences that come in this season of life. May we embolden and challenge one another to be strong in the Lord and serve Him always.

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### **Young Adults:**

In 2023, GRYA continued to connect young adults at Grace Road with each other and the church for a second year! The group hosted ten events that included a bonfire worship night, picnic, trivia, and a BBQ Friendsgiving, all with intentionality for connection and community building. This year, GRYA has connected at least 200 young adults! We have been encouraged by the increased community, building of relationships, and development of mentorship; both broadly and through specific events.

One of the GRYA Leadership Team Members shared:

**"I was searching for community in the Summer of 2022, and didn't know anyone for the first few weeks I was here. Then, we had 'Dipsgiving' in the Fall of 2022. A year later, I'm completely plugged in throughout the church, and involved in GRYA. This is where people my age and circumstance are hanging out, and I enjoy getting to connect with them in a Biblical way."**

Leadership Team: Clay Bailey, Josh Hill, Maddie Jensen, Katie Loch, Brad Yoder, Jessie Hartley, John and Tabitha Gould

Special Thanks: Rusty Pagenkemper, the Trahans, Kirk Adams, Kasey Moffett, Abby Holmsten, Danielle Marzano, Caleb Checksfield, Ernst Reynolds, Alec Carsky, Libby Clark, Leah Bassett, Abbey Sitterley

### **Grace Groups:**

This year was another encouraging one for our Grace Groups. Each year, we seek to expand options to enable more people in our church to live in fellowship and community. Being able to fill this need is a wonderful puzzle and one that we continue to rely on God for as we seek to meet these needs. Caring for our Grace group members is at the core of our ministry. Thankfully, our leaders were able to hear from our Care Director, Nicole Dumas, as we seek to do so more consistently and holistically. In 2023, Grace Groups saw picnics, parties, celebrations, and opportunities to be the Body of Christ.



# Institute



**In 2023**, the Grace Road Institute offered classes on Biblical Theology, Hermeneutics, Global Missions, and Systematic Theology. Nearly **200 people** participated in these courses. We also completed the inaugural year of the new Saints & Scholars program, a 29-week class designed for more advanced theological study in the context of the local church community. Looking back on his time of theological study in the program, one student noted, **"It feels as though a small crack in a door has revealed an awe-inspiring room that I want to have opened even if just a little more."** 26 students have signed up to dive deeper in the 2023-2034 Saints & Scholars program. Our hope is that the Grace Road Institute continues to serve the church by offering accessible theological and biblical education for years to come. Join us in a future class!





# Volunteers + Sundays

2023 has brought many new faces to our Sunday morning volunteer teams, including Hospitality (coffee), Greeting, Ushers, Safety, Parking, Communion, Set Up, and Tear Down. With a little over **200 volunteers** total, about 30-40 serve each Sunday to help people feel welcomed, known, and cared for. It's encouraging to watch each person who comes into the building be greeted with a smile and a cup of coffee.

**With a little over 200 volunteers total, about 30-40 serve each Sunday...**



These areas of service can seem small or unnecessary, but from the first interaction someone has with a parking volunteer to a hot cup of coffee and a door held open for them, each personal touch is a choice to see and **love people as Jesus does**. Beyond initial greetings, people ask questions, share prayer requests, give events with our volunteers. Hospitality is an important biblical value and our volunteers live it out every Sunday.





# GKids

Our kids ministry grows year after year, and 2023 was no exception. Take a look at these stats!

# 463

**Total kids**  
(Regular Attenders)

# 247

**Weekly Average**  
(57 of them being 2 & under)

# 78

**New Families**

# 25

**New Babies**

# 103

**New Kids**

# 56,160

**Puffs Consumed**  
(haha!)

# 208

**GKids Team Volunteers**

# 46

**New Volunteers**

# 70

**Volunteers to fully staff a Sunday**  
(35 per service)

# 12

**Kids Baptized**  
(Including Jr. High)



We hosted our first official "Back To Church Sunday" since the pandemic with balloons and swag and celebration. **344 kids attended!**

We launched a Sunday morning Jr High GKids Class this year! They meet at the 11:00 service with an average attendance of **18 kids**.



# Teen Ministry

Rewind



**Rewind 2023 was a great year!** From weekly gatherings to our Winter Retreat, Flower City Work Camp, Word of Life Summer Camp, the Reverb all-nighter, and more, this was a year to remember! A special thank you to Drew and Riley Hoselton who helped us get to Summer camp and Reverb!

**A special thank you** as well to all the adult leaders who serve weekly in Rewind. We love you! Our prayer for 2024 is that Rewind would be a **place where young people can grow in their faith, build healthy relationships, and be encouraged to live and love like Jesus.**



## Care Ministry



At Grace Road, it is our hope that as we meet with people one on one, for premarital, and for marriage care, we facilitate safe spaces (in care meetings and groups alike). We want people to feel they can **come as they are**, image bearers with inherent dignity and worth, and be met with grace and truth. We seek to be rooted in the Word and **led by the Spirit**, entrusting the work of sanctification to the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. We aim to walk alongside each other as we bring things from darkness into the light of Christ and put our feet on the solid ground of the gospel.

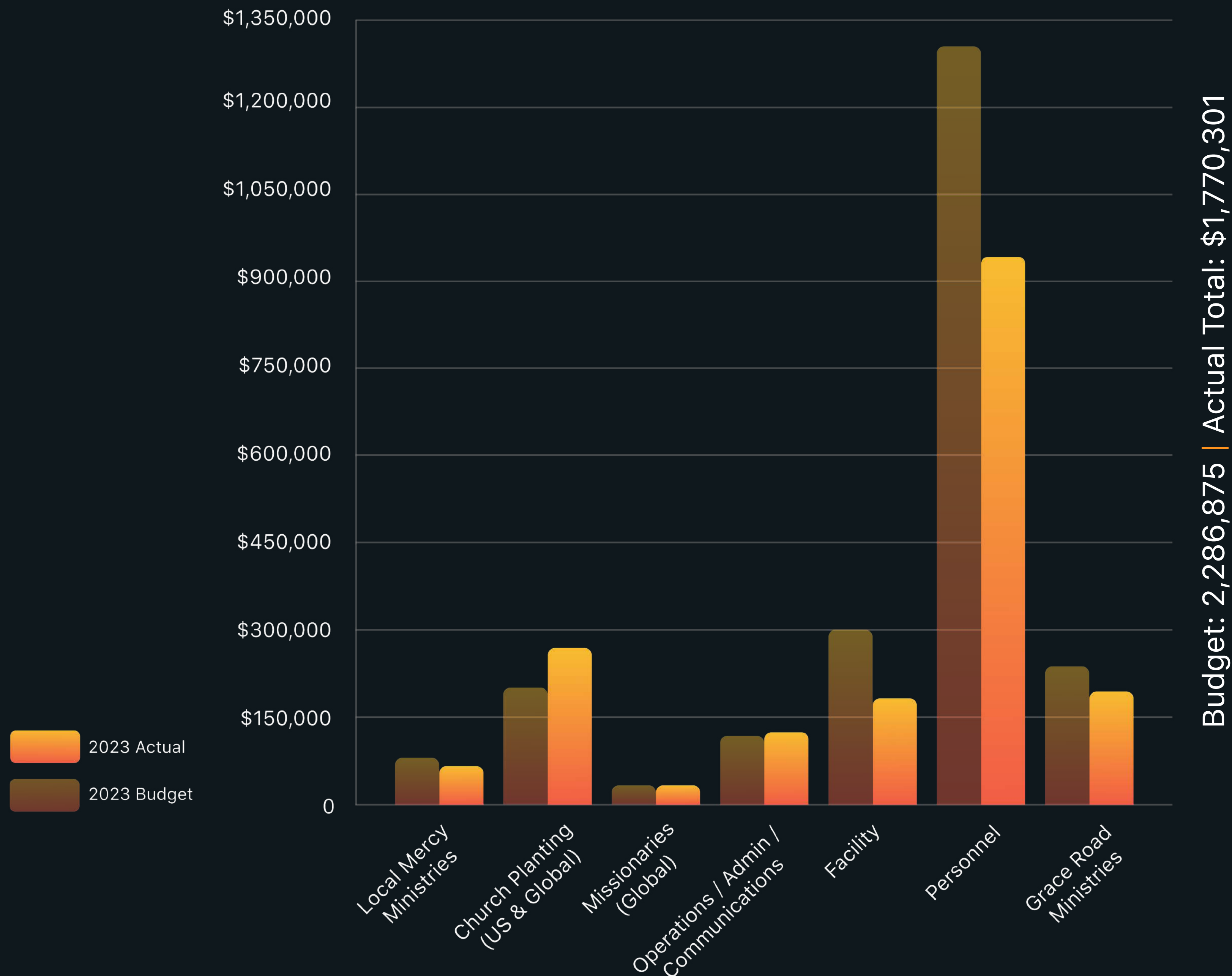
Through the generosity of Grace Roaders, we have been able to tangibly care for our members through the paying of mortgages, medical bills, and utility bills. We have been able to see our members fulfill meal trains for one another and make burdens lighter together through the meeting of one another's needs. Additionally, we have been able to be generous in the community through the giving towards groceries and rental assistance to people who come our way.

In need of practical care or assistance?

[Learn more](#)



Offering Budget: 2,333,398 | Offering Total: \$2,808,666



Our church leadership approaches expenditures with **wisdom and careful consideration**. You may notice some of our categories are under budget this year. This is partly because of some staffing transitions that left positions unfilled for parts of the year.

Additionally, we know that another location or church plant is likely in our future. By reserving savings when possible, we can approach future church planting with flexibility and plant without taking on excessive debt.

Our Facility budget includes a savings for major repairs and improvements on our current facility.



# Women's Conference 2023



At this year's Grace Road Women's Conference, we were able to host **over 300** women to worship together and hear the word of God taught by Jani Ortlund. Our women gathered for a full day to sing, enjoy each other's company, study in three different breakout tracks, and learn from Scripture.

We loved seeing so many faces, old and new, gathered again for the conference. We're already counting down the days to the next one in 2025!





# In Memoriam

In Memoriam Jaime Josef Soley, Jr.



May 19, 2000 — August 6th, 2023

## **Jaime Josef Soley, Jr.**

Jaime lived a unique and remarkable life. He loved coming to church. He loved the music, but perhaps he could take or leave the sermon. (The family remembers a time he yelled out "lunch" right in the middle of the sermon - which is probably what everybody else there was thinking as well.) Suddenly this past August, he went to sleep, and awoke in the presence of Jesus.

**He loved the Lord, He loved to worship, he loved family, and certainly loved food.**

While he was here, he loved going for walks with his dad and his dog, doing puzzles, watching movies, and singing praise music.



It's a huge comfort to know that so many of the things he loved are his in overflowing measure today: He can worship and sing in the presence of Jesus, seeing him face to face.

The time of reunion with the Lord is repeatedly described as a time of feasting and joy.

But beyond all the externals, he personally knows the love and glory of Jesus.

So there is much to be thankful for. We are thankful for the 23 years we had with Jaime and all the people he brought joy to: His parents and sisters loved him and built their lives around Jaime and some of his needs, but they did so without a sense of burden because of the happiness Jaime brought to them.

He had many caretakers who spent 40 hours per week with him since he was two years old, and they grew to enjoy and love Jaime over the years. Jaime liked order and routine, so his waitresses came to know him and know his exact order.

Jaime loved to see his friend Justin at church. Everybody who knew Jamie came to like him because he uniquely approached all of his relationships without any jealousy or anger.

**His parents instilled two key values in him: love and respect. And he took those to heart and applied them in his life.**

And when we lose someone like Jaime, it's easy for us to feel completely disoriented - like one of our guiding lights isn't around anymore.

But there's a good place to anchor our hearts: In Christ, in the resurrection promised for all who believe, and the good future we have with Jesus and with Jaime, when we see Christ face-to-face.