



ANNUAL REPORT

Jan 1, 2017 – Dec 31, 2017

GRACE
BIBLE CHURCH

www.gracebibleofoxford.com

GROWING DEEPER



TO LOVE BETTER

1TIM 1:5

LETTER FROM J.D.

Dear church family:

Welcome to the 2017 Grace Bible Church annual report. In it I hope you find lots of helpful information about our church, where we've been over the last year, and our hopes for the upcoming season in the life of the church.

It's been a year of changes at Grace, as you'll see as you peruse the report. We've deemphasized some ministries and added others. New families have joined, others have moved away. The numbers are encouraging, but of course numbers aren't the whole story. The Holy Spirit is often at work when in the eyes of the world everything is falling apart. However, when the numbers are combined with the excitement many of you have about our church, and with the stories of changed lives and faithfulness to God, there is plenty of reason to rejoice over what the Lord has done in 2017.

We as elders can't always guarantee good news about our church, but we can always strive to be transparent and clearly communicate what's going on at Grace to the best of our ability. We never want members frustrated because they feel they don't know or can't ask the leaders of Grace questions. Our prayer is that the annual report is one more way that you can keep informed and remain "in the loop." We hope you will read this report, learn more about your church, help us in those areas where we are weak, and praise God with us in our strengths. Perhaps someone will even read this report and notice a glaring hole in the life of Grace, and in turn feel called by God to fill in the gap.

Our ultimate goal at Grace Bible can be summarized by Colossians 1:28: "We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ."

Grace Bible Church of Oxford is a joy to pastor. Thanks for all the ways you encourage your elders and staff. As always, if we can do anything for you please let us know.

In Christ,

J.D.



2017

2017 STRATEGY REPORT

As many of you know, in 2017 we made public our five-year goals, one-year strategies and the specific tactics we would employ to achieve those strategies. These strategies represent initiatives we at Grace sensed God calling us to above and beyond what we currently do on a weekly and monthly basis. We know all too well that goals are easy to talk about, but often harder to put into action. For that reason, at each congregational meeting we give updates on each tactic labeling them 'done,' 'in progress' or 'not started.' I am thrilled to report that of the 66 tactics we articulated in January 2017, 62 are completed, two are in progress and two have not been started. Enclosed you will see what these tactics are, which staff member was responsible and why four of them are not completed. I'm unbelievably thankful for the gifted staff team and dozens of faithful members who made this possible.

Please be on the look out for our 2018 plan and, as always, if you have any questions about anything, please don't hesitate to ask.

Jim Davis



YEAR END FINANCIAL REPORT

As each financial year comes to a close, I tend to think back over the life of GBC. My first thought always goes to our first Lord's Supper where Ginger the dog stole the bread as we prayed. I thank the Causey family who unknowingly provided our first seating from Isaac's Grove set-up trailer. But most of all, I am just thankful to God and the way He has provided EVERYTHING this church has ever needed.

This year, God has provided abundantly for our financial needs. The offering today takes longer to collect than it used to take to count and record those first years, and for this we are truly grateful.

Thanks to your generous giving, we have been able to fund different ministries locally and across the world without interruption as in the past. We have upgraded some equipment and technology so that staff can do their jobs to love Oxford well. We have been able to give away discipleship materials to people wanting to learn more about what we believe or college students wanting to dive deeper into their faith. All of this is possible because of your generous gifts. Thank you.

Below are the year end numbers and how they break down. As always, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask!

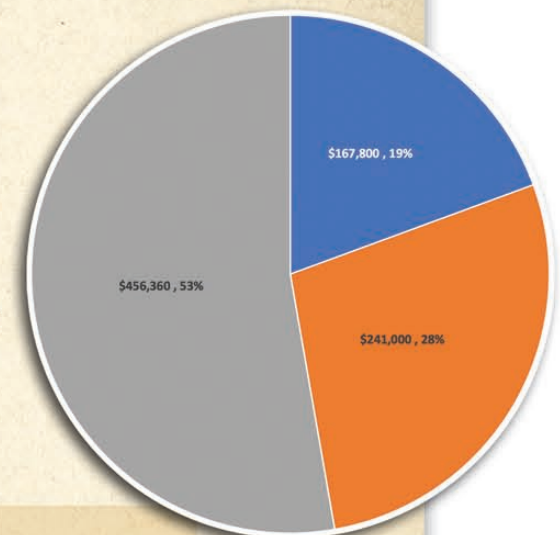
Giving: \$888,120.09

Expenses: \$835,577.72

Cash Assets: \$370,611.12

Cash Available: \$179,502.24

- Ministry (Worship, teaching, missions, church planting, discipleship, tutoring, benevolence)
- Ministry operations and expense (Operations, facilities, technology, finance)
- Personnel (Compensation and benefits for full-time, part-time staff and interns)



Chris Teague



MEMBERSHIP/ BAPTISM REPORT

As of December 28, Grace Bible Church has 286 members. We've added thirty-five new members in 2017, and thirteen members moved away or joined other churches for a net gain of twenty-five members. We also were able to perform several baptisms over the course of the past year.

What is the significance of church membership? To be a part of Grace Bible means making a promise to the other people in the church to care for one another, participate in the ordinances, meet together regularly for worship and prayer, to resist sin and temptation, to protect the faithful teaching of the Bible at Grace, and to give cheerfully and regularly. Being a member, of course, means everyone in the church is making these same promises to you, while the elders promise to pray and care for all people in the fellowship.



In short, membership means committed relationships. It's a big deal to be a part of a church, as the Bible defines it.

The elders are thankful for all members at Grace. We don't take it lightly that anyone would make this commitment and we pray for you all regularly. Don't be surprised when you get a phone call from one of the pastors or elders asking to meet you for lunch. You're not in trouble; we genuinely want to know how you're doing and how we can pray for you. And of course if you ever have a need or a question for us, don't hesitate to let us know.

J.D.



2017

YOUTH REPORT

This year our youth studied the gospel of Luke, the Attributes of God and the Psalms in our weekly meetings each Sunday night at 5:30. One of our goals this year was for the students to be more involved in all aspects of worship. I am so thankful for all our college volunteers and the way they poured into the Grace youth! Below are a few Highlights from the year.



Honduras: In July we were able to take nine youth to the village of El Ocoté to help provide food, improve school buildings, build a home and engage them with the gospel.

Spring Retreat: In March we took students to the Grove at Read Oak Lake in Memphis where we enjoyed great teaching and an opportunity to get away and refocus.

D-Now: In August we had our second Discipleship Now focused on seeking the Kingdom of God. This event is a great way to start the year for both students and leaders.



Winter Retreat: We just finished our last event in December, Winter Retreat. We joined with two other churches at Lake Forest Ranch for an awesome weekend.

Core Seminar: In September we joined the rest of the church by having an hour together studying the Word and praying together. It has been a joy to everyone to have this additional hour on Sundays to dig deeper.



Drew Narmour



2017

CORE SEMINAR REPORT

One of the big changes at Grace during the 2017 year was the addition of our core seminars. We have added four core seminars (Old Testament, History and Theology, Essentials and Engaging The World) aimed at adult education and will be adding one more in January 2018. A huge thanks to the 12 core seminar teachers. The curriculum was not as plug and play as we advertised, but thanks to the hard work and talent of the teachers, they were launched well and capably led.

We started with about 100 people in attendance and settled down to average between 70-75 each week with Old Testament being the largest. This is almost even (maybe a little higher) than what we averaged each week in our community groups. We are going to launch a fifth core seminar led by JD and Jim aimed at the 30 or so who started to come and for whatever reason are not anymore.

If you have any questions about core seminars please contact Jim Davis. We would love to plug you in!

Jim Davis



2017

MISSIONS REPORT

Italy

This year we took 25 people to Salerno, Italy during Spring Break to help Chiesa Nuova Vita (Acts 29). The aim of this trip was primarily to engage the college students of Salerno with the gospel and try to connect spiritually interested students back to the church.

Leadership of this trip has now passed from Jim Davis into the very capable hands of Drew Narmour who will lead the trip in March 2018. If you are interested in learning more about this trip, please contact Drew.

Honduras

This summer we took 25 people including 9 youth on our fourth trip to Honduras to partner with Salt and Light ministries to help resource and reach the Hondurans. We built a home, helped in their farms, led a Vacation Bible School and shared the gospel. We will go again July 5-12, 2018. If you have any questions, please contact Drew Narmour.

Giving

In 2017, we were able to give \$98,064 away to missions and benevolence needs. We were thrilled to be able to give so much this year and are looking forward to giving more next year! If you would like to serve on our missions committee in 2018, please contact Jim Davis.

Prayer group

We have created a GroupMe for anyone interested in praying for our missionaries. We will update this account regularly and anyone is welcome to join. If you would like to join this prayer group, please email Amanda Sladkey.

Jim Davis



2017

LAND REPORT

It has been an interesting year in the story of GBC's quest for land. Several times we thought we had found "it", but as He often does God reminds us that the plan is His and not ours. Patience and faith have been the lessons of this process. It is just another reminder that Grace Bible Church is God's church and not ours.

304 Heritage Drive

We have signed a lease for the current facilities on Heritage Drive, paying the same amount of \$142,000 as 2017, with an end date of December 31, 2018.

HWY 7 North

The property at the corner of HWY 7 North and Industrial Park Road is currently under contract as we perform the due diligence of securing the rights necessary to build a church. On May 31st, the current contract will expire if no amendments are made.

Chris Teague



NEIGHBORHOOD PRAYER MEETING REPORT

One of the new ministries added at Grace Bible in 2017 are the neighborhood prayer meetings. These meetings are held once a week in neighborhoods all over Oxford. In these gatherings neighbors meet to read Scripture, sing a hymn, and read a brief prayer. Last year we worked through the Bible readings found in the Book of Common Prayer, known as "Lectionary B." In 2018, we'll begin working through the "Lectionary A" readings. These are simply Bible reading plans first put together by Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, back in the sixteenth century.

The meetings are designed to be brief, with the content lasting no more than fifteen minutes. That way neighbors can come and go quickly, on their way home from school, work, or the grocery store. However, in many groups attendees linger over snacks or coffee for a few more minutes and devote some extra time to getting to know one another and prayer. Our hope is that this will develop more meaningful friendships and serve as an evangelistic outreach to our neighbors.

These meetings are designed with kids in mind. There is no childcare, but since the meetings are brief and there is no teaching or discussion it's not a problem if children run and play during the meeting. Older kids can participate in the reading and singing and our hope is that they would grow up thinking it normal to go to a neighbor's house and pray each week.

We currently have six neighborhood meetings: two on the west side of town (in Wellsgate and Woodlawn subdivisions), one on the northwest side (meeting in Quail Creek and Twelve Oaks), one on the north side of town, another on the southeast side of town, and a south side meeting. On any given week one hundred people or more are involved.

See the church website, the Grace app, the newsletter, or the Sunday morning worship bulletin each week for the time and place of a prayer meeting closest to you. If there is no meeting near you and you're interested in hosting one, please let J.D. know.

J.D.



GRACELAND REPORT

2017 was a great year for our children's ministry! Our numbers remained consistent this year, averaging between sixty and eighty most Sundays, but on a few Sundays we surpassed ninety! I know numbers are not the most important detail, but I sure love seeing all the sweet little faces each Sunday.

Each Sunday, seeing the smiling children be-bopping down the hallway warms my heart and makes me excited to be exactly where I am at Grace Bible Church. I was blessed to attend ETCH family conference again this year where I was encouraged and challenged in my role. My biggest takeaway from the conference can be summed up with a quote by A.W. Tozer - "Nothing less than a whole Bible can make a whole Christian." Discipling children does not happen apart from the whole Word. It needs to dwell richly in our homes and among those we serve, greatest of those being our children. This is my inspiration for the coming year as I seek to minister to children and volunteers as well as equip parents to shepherd their children.

I have been pleased and motivated by the Sunday school curriculum, The Gospel Project. We are nearing the end of a three year cycle that has taken us through the entire Bible. Each week it highlights the Gospel and brings every lesson back to Jesus Christ. Because of the new schedule, I have had the opportunity to utilize the Gospel Project's suggested large group time to engage a group of students from Pre-K to 6th grade. This has been incredibly fun and energizing to me! Being able to personally engage with the children has changed my perspective as a children's director and given me newfound excitement for my Sunday mornings. Serving little ones and their families is one of the most rewarding tasks I do. It is written in Matthew 19:14, "But Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.'" I pray this is our church's heart and response to children and family ministry every year!

Danica Boyd



DEACON REPORT

While the elders provide overall direction, Grace has deacons and deaconesses, appointed by the elders, who oversee specific areas of service in the church. Even though they are not the spiritual overseers, their character is of utmost importance and their service to the body should be recognized. For this reason, we have installed a Deacon/Deaconess Commissioning process. Deacons will be members of Grace nominated and tested according to 1 Timothy 3:8-10 and then appointed by the elders. The candidates will then be prayed for by the elders and congregation at the following quarterly congregational meeting.

The deacons for 2018 are:

- Facilities: **Kim Spillers**
- Meals: **Shannon Richardson**
- Ordinances: **Martin Fisher**
- Digital Media: **Jason Boyd**
- Service Media: **Nishal Bhikha**
- Ushers: **Jonathan Herlan**
- Greeters: **Jonathan Herlan**
- Weddings: **Corrie Reed**
- Audio Visual: **Britt Fitts**

Thanks to all who have or are currently serving as deacons. If you are interested in serving as a deacon or have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Chris Teague



CELEBRATE RECOVERY REPORT

As we met for leadership training relationships and trust began to grow deeper. We had a 90 day period of training where we learned what the weekly meetings should look like and how open share groups should be conducted. In addition to leadership training we also had step study training. In step studies we work through our hurts, habits and hang ups toward recovery. Each of us felt the strength of the Spirit of God at work in our lives and the camaraderie that can only be experienced as we work together as a family toward the same goal.

Fellowship didn't just develop at the leadership level, but ministry wide thanks to the growth of the ministry. We have experienced too much of God's grace in our own brokenness to not give Him thanks for this growth. We now meet every Monday night at Heritage Drive and have people from every walk of life and many church backgrounds.

2017 had many highlights including sending two members to Charlotte for a one day training and three members to the annual four day 'Summit' training. Because of the confidential nature of CR, we don't report much of what happens on Mondays, but I will say that we are deeply grateful to the Lord in the way He seems to be using this ministry.

Please pray for continued growth in 2018. Please pray for the Oxford community to continually understand that recovery from sin is available to everyone and for the "destigmatization" of recovery ministry. Lastly, please pray that we would continue to carry the message of healing to all the lost and/or exhausted of Oxford.

Thank you all for the support you have given CR. Please know that Monday large group is open to anyone and it is always a huge encouragement to have people come by. If you have any questions about CR, please feel free to contact me.

Paul Carpenter



2017

MEN'S MINISTRY REPORT

Leadership Team:

The formation of the Men's Ministry Leadership Team was the first and most important task in establishing the Men's Ministry at Grace. This team was established in May of 2017 and put the mission and vision in place and laid out the ministry structure. The leadership team and their roles are as follows:

Director: Brandon Beckett, **Service Team:** Niles Bartholomew, Preston Gallaher and Joseph Deleon, **Events Team:** Kirk Eddleman and Will Berry
Prayer Team: Adam Smith, **Communications Team:** Blake Thompson and Jason Boyd.

2017 in Review:

Men's Retreat

Dr. Cofield of RTS Orlando led about 50 men through biblical manhood at our first men's retreat.

Service Projects Completed in 2017:

Oxford Middle School Library - Painted the back room.

Pregnancy Test Center of Oxford - Leaf removal, new mulch for flower beds, and close closet clean out and delivery of unneeded items to Helping Hands.

Bible Study:

The Bible study team began a Wednesday morning (6:00a.m.) group in September. The first study was a six week study of the book of Galatians. After completing Galatians, they began a 12 week study of Daniel.

Fellowship events for 2017:

August: Sand volleyball tournament, **September:** Men's breakfast with Paul Carpenter, **October:** Monday Night Football/MLB playoff night and chili dinner, **November:** Men's breakfast with Kevin Dreary of Fathers in the Field.

Brandon Beckett



2017



WOMEN'S MINISTRY REPORT

2017 was an exciting year for the Graceful Women's Ministry (GWM). The GWM leadership team was restructured to have an Executive team consisting of the committee leaders. I am so thankful for each of our volunteer leaders and excited to give you a report on each.

Administration/Finance committee continued to provide administrative support, hold monthly meetings, report to elders, submitted a yearly budget.

Legacy of Grace became the title of our discipleship, mentoring and study of God's Word division of GWM in 2017. We offered three Bible studies, Daily Grace, a Facebook group for women to encourage each other as they read through the entire Bible and GEMS Ministry. Our Single Women's ministry also began a book study based on They Were Single Too: Eight Biblical Role Models by David Hoffeditz.

Events committee kicked off the year by planning events that focused on gatherings for women to authentically connect while deepening their relationships with each other and the Lord. We hosted a monthly Lunch Bunch gathering and five additional events including a women's retreat.

Communications committee has been very diligent this past year to use multiple avenues of communication to encourage women and to connect women including the Graceful Newsletter on a monthly basis. New communication in 2017 included an Instagram account, updated webpage and calendar, adding GWM to text for information in bulletin and a google request form for GWM communication requests.

Outreach was our newest GWM committee. This fall we hosted a Baby Bottle drive for the Pregnancy Center of Oxford resulting in giving the center \$948.00 and a "More than a Meal" evening of service in December.

Jennifer Bartholomew



ALEX COLEMAN REPORT

Every Tuesday and Thursday during the school year Operation Life Vision, led by our friend Alex Coleman, meets at Heritage Drive to provide tutoring and mentoring to 40-60 underprivileged students in Oxford and Lafayette County. Their goal is to teach the students the importance of learning in order to create lifelong learners, life skills, and biblical knowledge. The students will also come together to eat a meal as a family. This ministry, though, is so much more than just tutoring. It is also Bible study, career counseling, goal setting, lessons in manhood and womanhood, as well as a safe-carefree place to have some fun.

We have been thrilled this year to see members of Grace plugging in as tutors and building trust with the students. Some of them have even begun to attend our youth worship! This is a great way to serve the kids of Oxford-Lafayette County. Some of their current needs include more tutors, mentors, volunteers to serve food or just to play games and money to buy a second van used to pick up and drop off kids each night.

If you would like more information about Operation Life Vision, please contact Chris Teague.

Chris Teague



MUSIC REPORT

One of the most frequently asked questions in church is “What do you believe about worship?”. Here is how we answer that question at Grace Bible Church. We have six values we filter all of what we do musically through.

It must bring glory to God

It must focus on the gospel

It must be Biblical

It must edify God’s people

It must be congregational

It must be undistracting and excellent

Our hope in 2018 is to build on these values by identifying and equipping more talented musicians as we sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. If you would like to be involved in the music at Grace, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Jared Smith



CHURCH PLANTING

In 2017, Grace Bible Church stepped in to a whole new phase in church planting. We have supported church planters and new churches in the past, but now, we have officially undertaken planting one! Casey and Lauren Russel began sensing a general call to go on the mission field in 2016, but this year that they decided on Las Vegas.

Las Vegas is one of the least church cities in the nation and has become a focus for various church planting movements. God’s work is evident though in the establishment of several strong churches in recent years. We are excited about this work and ask you to pray for the Russells and anyone else who might join them.

GBC has tried to move slowly, carefully and prayerfully with this church plant which will be called Redemption Community Church. The hope and prayer is that God would continue to raise up church planters amongst us, and continue to allow us to support them in prayer, guidance and funding. We want them to have everything they need, humanly speaking, to carry out the task at hand.

So far this year, the team has taken four vision trips to Las Vegas, decided on much of the DNA of the church and has mostly completed an Assessment process by the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. That process is due to be complete February 12 and 13, 2018. If you have any questions about this church plant or are interested in being a part of it, please contact Casey Russel.

Casey Russel



ANALYTICS AT A GLANCE

WEBSITE

The website continues to be the front door of the church. It has gotten so predictable that we can actually anticipate which cities our new visitors will come from before they even walk in the door!

- 16,071 sessions (57.9% are new guests and 42.1% are return users)
- 40,622 page views (Top 3 pages: About, Service Information, Staff)
- 49 states (Top 3: Mississippi, Georgia and Texas)
- 114 countries (Top 3: US, UK and Nigeria)
- Most watched video on the website - J.D. Shaw testimony
- Most watched sermon of 2017 - Admitting The Problem, Romans 7:14-25
- How do most people find our website? 1) Search engines (68% of traffic) 2) Social
- Media (80% Facebook) 3) Jim Davis Blog 4) Ole Miss BSU website 5) The Gospel Coalition website

APP

- 2,773 app downloads
- 40,964 app launches
- 894 push notification subscribers

BLOGS

JD Shaw blog

- Average views per blog 178
- Top 3 articles
 - Seven Theses on Being Public with Your Faith 3,074
 - Why I'm Glad We Went Back to One Worship Service 1,849
 - Charlottesville, The Alt-Right and The Oxford Courthouse Square II 574

Jim Davis blog

- Average views per blog 1,341.8
- Top 3 articles
 - Why We Are Going From Small Groups to Sunday School 10,434
 - 7 Lessons We Learned From Cancer 2,079
 - Congrats, Iceland! Hitler Would Be Proud 1,480

WEEKLY EMAIL / SOCIAL MEDIA

- 461 subscribers
- 27.6% open rate (this is actually a pretty high rate for a mass email)
- Facebook/Instagram/Twitter

These are still the way most people receive their church information. We have added a closed Facebook group for members of Grace Bible Church to share information and prayer requests in as safe a way as possible. For most churches like ours, this is the primary way information is shared between members. Facebook is also the primary way people access sermons behind the website and app. Presumably, we are reaching people here who are not attending Grace.

