



# GRACE BIBLE CHURCH

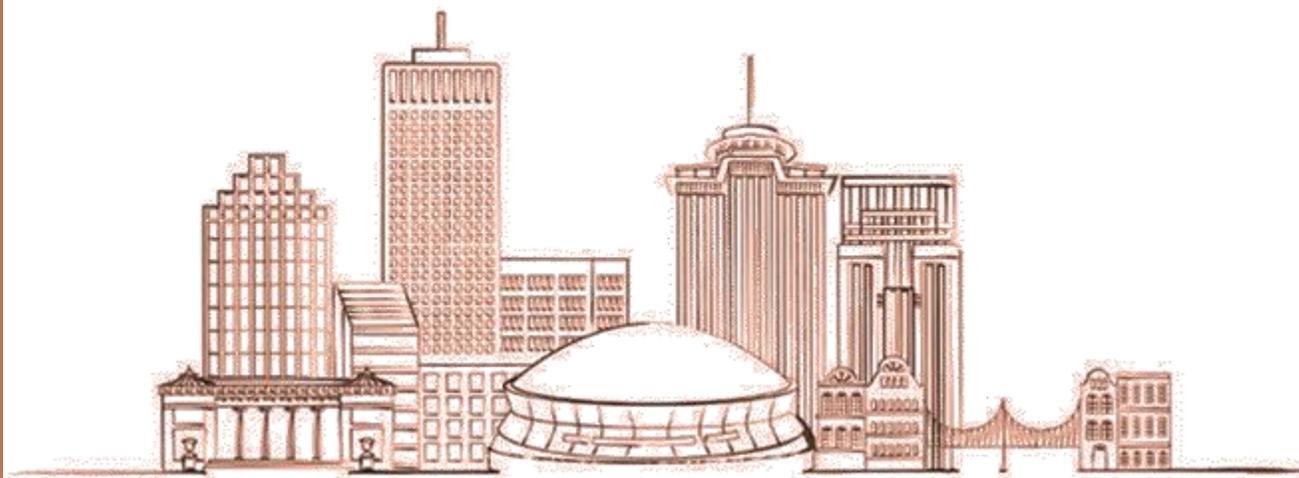
GRACE BIBLE CHURCH | SUPPORT  
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

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# CONTENTS

THE MISSION	1
THE JOURNEY	2
THE PLACE	3
THE DISTINCTIVES	5
THE PREACHER	6
THE TEAM	7
THE AFFIRMATION	11
THE NEED	12



“A God-glorifying vision is always wedded to a church-building vision because it is through the strengthening and expansion of the church that God is most exalted in the world.” - Joel Beeke<sup>1</sup>

# THE MISSION

The unsearchably great God of the Scriptures is worthy of all glory, honor, praise, and blessing (Rom. 11:36; Ps. 145:3; Rev. 4:11). He is so determined to receive his due praise that, in love, he eagerly gave up his Son, Jesus, to purchase for himself individuals from every tribe and tongue and people and nation (Isa. 53:10; Jn. 3:16; 1Cor. 6:18; Rev. 5:9). From the time that Christ ascended until he rescues his people from his coming wrath (1Thess. 5:9-10), the church remains the sole sanctioned, equipped, authorized, and empowered vehicle for bringing the gospel to mankind for the glory of God. Therefore, we have purposed with the Lord’s help to establish a church in New Orleans, Louisiana in November 2023.

With God’s glory as our preeminent pursuit, we intend to follow Jesus’ clear instructions (Mt. 28:18-20) and the early church’s subsequent example (Acts 2:14-47) by discipling New Orleanians, baptizing them and teaching them to obey everything that Jesus commanded. At its most basic level, this discipleship requires teaching and modeling godliness (Jn. 13:1-17; 1Thess. 2:1-12). This simple pattern is comprehensive in its scope and over time, by God’s grace, will transform every aspect of the lives of those who are drawn into the church.

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<sup>1</sup> Joel Beeke and Nick Thompson, *Pastors and Their Critics: A Guide to Coping with Criticism in the Ministry*, (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing), 154.

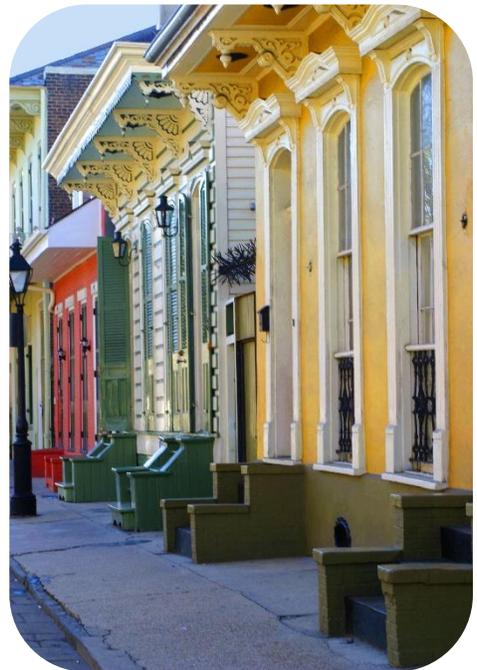
# THE JOURNEY

The origin of every local church is rooted in the ministry of another local church (or multiple local churches). Grace Bible Church NOLA is no different. [Grace Bible Church](#) (Tempe, AZ) was committed to equipping the saints for the work of ministry before the need for sound churches in New Orleans was ever being considered by its pastors. As Grace Bible Church (Tempe) was growing in its ability to equip and disciple, God was also working on a smaller scale on the other side of the country.

God saved Omri Miles in February 2008 while he was attending college in Augusta, GA. Along with this new spiritual life came a great burden to bring the gospel to New Orleans, LA, where he was born and raised. However, after graduating a few months later, he would drive 1,500 miles past New Orleans to join GBC (Tempe) and learn how to live the Christian life. Over the past 14.5 years, Omri has been preparing and laboring to see a biblically sound church planted in New Orleans East.

In May 2021, the elders were ready to make their intentions for church planting in New Orleans formally known to the church body. After a few informational meetings, several families started gathering monthly as a core team to begin praying together, learning about New Orleans, and preparing for this endeavor.

The core team visited New Orleans on scouting trips in December 2021 and then again in July 2022. These trips served as the introduction to the city for many core team members, further knitting their lives to one another and helping them to discern whether God was calling them to this work. Currently, several households plan to relocate to New Orleans to begin laboring in gospel ministry there.



# THE PLACE

“New Orleans was built in a place God never intended a city to be built...six feet below sea level in the middle of a swamp, squeezed between a giant river and a huge lake.”<sup>2</sup> The French called it Le Flattant (The Floating Land) and the English named it The Wet Grave.<sup>3</sup> “It was also a city plagued by epidemics...a haven for political refugees, as well as...the sanctuary of criminals and, above all, the dream of fortune seekers.”<sup>4</sup> Historically, New Orleans vacillated between Spanish and French control, was a settlement funded by “perhaps the most monumentally fraudulent real estate scheme in history,”<sup>5</sup> initially increased its population through forced immigration with inmates from Paris prisons, and became characterized in its infancy by “frequent and almost inevitable robberies which were perpetuated...by a multitude of vagabonds of every nation.”<sup>6</sup>

Despite these deprecations, New Orleans (pronounced “Or-linz”) is considered by some “the Nation’s most interesting city.”<sup>7</sup> It is renowned for its unique cuisine, the birthplace of Jazz music, and one of the top ten most visited cities in the United States. From its inception, New Orleans has been a hodgepodge of nations, ethnicities, and languages, resulting in a culture all its own. Nevertheless, it has yet been unable to outlive its initial reputation for violence and immorality, since, to date, it is regularly among the country’s most dangerous cities<sup>8</sup> and infamous for its celebration of the rankest debauchery<sup>9</sup>. The need for sound, gospel-preaching churches in New Orleans is undeniable and urgent.

## NEW ORLEANS EAST

The entire city contains about 384,000 residents within 169 mi<sup>2</sup>. New Orleans East, a section of the city lying just southeast of Lake Pontchartrain, is the youngest section of the city and home to approximately 85,000 souls, a slow but steady increase since it was devastated in 2005 by Hurricane Katrina. It was affected more than most areas of the city and has been the slowest to recover.

The East never attained the prominence that some sought for it in the 70s. Today, abandoned properties, unkempt lots, and a scarcity of long-standing businesses are the unfortunate scars that still mark New Orleans East after Hurricane Katrina. To these economic sores can be added even greater maladies: the rarity of two-parent homes, high rates of violent crimes, low education levels, pervasive poverty, a languishing police department, and an indolent population. The prominence of these problems is felt by all, but are perpetually misdiagnosed and mistreated. New Orleanians are sin-sick and unaware that Christ is the solution. In Him “are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2:3), which is why the East needs a church that is

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<sup>2</sup> Mel Leavitt, *A Short History of New Orleans* (San Francisco: Lexicos, 1982), 7.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Albert E. Fossier, *New Orleans: The Glamour Period, 1800-1840* (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Company, 1998), i.

<sup>5</sup> Leavitt, *A Short History of New Orleans*, 22.

<sup>6</sup> Fossier, *New Orleans*, 8.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, i.

<sup>8</sup> See “Beleaguered Southern City Seizes Murder Capital Crown from St. Louis” (<https://www.dailywire.com/news/beleaguered-southern-city-seizes-murder-capital-crown-from-st-louis>) and “NeighborhoodScout’s Most Dangerous Cities — 2022” (<https://www.neighborhoodscout.com/blog/top100dangerous>).

<sup>9</sup> Mardi Gras, a weeks-long carnival that precedes 40 days of fasting for Lent, and Southern Decadence (aka “Gay Mardi Gras”) are a case in point. These festivals have been celebrated since the mid-1700s and 1970s, respectively, and boast of great acts of wickedness practiced en masse. During these events, people practice every deed of the flesh listed in Galatians 5:19-21 publicly.



teaching the truth clearly and discipling those with an ear to hear.

There are a few churches outside of New Orleans East that seem somewhat like-minded.<sup>10</sup> These churches, however, are not ministering to residents in this area and gather in places not conducive to fellowship for the East's population.

## RELIGIOUS CLIMATE

Roman Catholicism has always dominated New Orleans' religious makeup. Today, many Protestant churches are heavily influenced by charismatic doctrines as well as health and wealth/prosperity gospel teaching. The Southern Baptist Convention possesses the largest number of congregations of any denomination in the city and has one of its flagship schools, [New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary](#), located in Gentilly, an area bordering New Orleans East. But as is common in the Bible Belt, many citizens claim to know God but by their deeds deny him (Ti. 1:16). We believe these factors build an even stronger case that the city needs more churches possessing our particular distinctives.

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<sup>10</sup> These churches include [The Field Church](#) (Mandeville, LA), [St. Rose Community Church](#) (St. Rose, LA), [NOLA Baptist](#) (Uptown), and [Immanuel Community Church](#) (Gentilly).

# THE DISTINCTIVES

**QUALIFIED LEADERSHIP.** Those who lead God's church must be marked by exemplary godliness so that the church's message is irreproachable and so that its members are conformed to Christ's image as they imitate the faith of their leaders. *Therefore, we will appoint leaders who are marked by imitable godliness, wisdom, and humility, never bypassing these qualities in favor of a man's skill, charisma, or gifting.*

1Cor. 11:1; 1Tim. 3:1-13; Ti. 1:5-9; 2:7-8; Heb. 13:7

**EXPOSITORY PREACHING.** Expository preaching is the authoritative proclamation of God's Word in which the preacher clearly sets forth the divinely intended meaning of the biblical text and brings the contemporary implications of its timeless truth to bear on the lives of the people.<sup>11</sup> *Therefore, all that we do as a church must reflect our dependence on and prioritization of the preaching and teaching of God's word.*

1Tim. 1:3-11; 6:3-5; 2Tim. 3:16-4:2; Ti. 2:1-10

**FRUITFUL FAITH.** Everyone whom God graciously saves through faith will embrace Jesus as Lord, ever striving to make their thoughts, desires, motives, words, and deeds submit to God's will so that they bear fruit in keeping with repentance. *Therefore, we will seek to graciously stimulate and humbly evaluate one another's faith, knowing that our obedient (albeit imperfect) good works are the evidence of saving faith and God's grace at work in us.*

Rom. 6:1-4; Eph. 2:8-10; 4:17-5:4; Phil. 2:12-13; Ti. 2:11-14; Jas. 1:26-27; 2:14-26; 1Jn. 3:4-10

**MASCULINE TRAINING.** Continually raising up men to Christian maturity is essential to the church's proper working and enduring faithfulness because God has ordained that men would lead the church as well as the family, which is the basic building block of any society. *Therefore, we will make training the men of the church our discipleship priority, yet without neglecting the discipleship needs of the women and children among us.*

Gen. 2:19-20; 3:16, 20; Mk. 3:13-19; Eph. 5:22-24; 1Tim. 2:7; 3:1-7; 2Tim. 2:2; Ti. 1:5-9

**MEANINGFUL MEMBERSHIP.** Church membership confirms a believer's attachment to a local assembly so that each member formally affirms the church's teaching and formally commits to participating in the church's ministry, living obediently with the other members, and submitting to the church's leadership. *Therefore, we will maintain clear standards for membership and prioritize our ministry to one another.*

Acts 2:41-47; 17:4; Rom. 12:10; Eph. 4:25; Heb. 13:17; 1Pet. 5:1-5

**BIBLICAL COUNSELING.** The Scriptures are sufficient to equip God's people to live a life pleasing to Him without the help of psychological theories, scientific discoveries, or manmade ideologies. *Therefore, we will consult the Scriptures alone to understand what constitutes good human behavior, proper mental life, and healthy personhood.*

Ps. 19:7-9; 119:24; Pro. 2:9; 30:5-6; Rom. 15:14; Eph. 5:3-4; 1Tim. 3:14-15; 2Tim. 3:16-17

**FAMILIAL DISCIPLINE.** One primary way that God disciplines His children is through their loving pursuit and gentle correction of one another for their restoration or until unrepentant hardness of heart is revealed. *Therefore, we will strive to gently, patiently, and lovingly admonish, encourage, help, and instruct one another so that together we might share in God's holiness, represent Him accurately in the world, and faithfully uphold His truth.*

Pro. 12:1; Matt. 18:15-20; 1Cor. 5:1-13; 1Tim. 1:20; 3:14-15; 5:1; Ti. 3:10-11; Heb. 12:4-11; Rev. 3:19

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<sup>11</sup> Matthew Waymeyer, "Conversation with Matt Waymeyer" (The Expositors Seminary Blog, March 12, 2016).

# THE PREACHER



## TESTIMONY

I was raised by Christian parents in New Orleans, LA and made a profession of faith at an early age. However, I was blind to the offensiveness of my disobedience to God. Pride, anger, immorality, and self-righteousness were dear to me. While away at college, God started to show me the ruinous nature of my sinful habits and I began to realize that I was powerless to change myself. I enjoyed the very sins that weighed me down with guilt. In early 2008, I attended a conference, the theme of which was church discipline. The preachers at this conference articulated the gospel very clearly and for the first time, I understood my sin, God's wrath, Christ's substitution, and the Spirit's regenerating work. God produced a weight of conscience as I read First John, finally convincing me that I needed the salvation that I had wrongly claimed up to this point in my life. Four months after my conversion, I was in Arizona, benefitting from the ministry of the Word and discipleship at Grace Bible Church. It was there that I began to learn that the church was God's choice instrument for spreading His fame everywhere through the salvation of sinners who believe the gospel.

## TRAINING & CERTIFICATION

Master of Arts in Biblical Counseling from The Masters University (2009-2016)

Master of Divinity from Grace Bible Institute/The Expositors Seminary (2015-2020)

Certified Biblical Counselor with The Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (2018-present)

## SHEPHERDING & SERVICE

Appointed an elder at Grace Bible Church (April 2021)  
Pulpit supply (2017-present)

Discipling/counseling (2009-present)

Biblical Counseling of the East Valley, a counseling training ministry of GBC (2018-present)

414, the young adult ministry (2019-present)

Smallgroup leadership (2019-present)

The book table (2015-present)

## FAVORITE BOOKS

*The Attributes of God* - Arthur Pink

*The Existence and Attributes of God* - Stephen Charnock

*The Bondage of the Will* - Martin Luther

*William Carey* - S. Pearce Carey

*Psalms* - William S. Plumer

*Holiness* - J. C. Ryle

*Human Nature in Its Fourfold State* - Thomas Boston

*The Reformed Pastor* - Richard Baxter

*Words to Winners of Souls* - Horatius Bonar

*A Godly Man's Picture* - Thomas Watson

# THE TEAM



## DIANA ALLEN

God, in His pleasure, saved me in my early 40's. Currently, I disciple women and serve the younger women and families with children in Grace Bible Church. I often host saints in my home for fellowship. I also moved to New Orleans and set up a host home for helping the core team transition into the city.

New Orleans is an open door for the gospel. God willing, He will give me boldness to make His name known there.

Please pray for wisdom moving forward and growth in love for Christ and personal holiness as we await His appearing.



## THE DUDLEY FAMILY

Nicholas & Britney, Zaccai (5), Gimli (1), Galadriel (born: 10/11/22)

God saved me toward the end of high school and Britney at a young age. We met in 2012 at The Master's University in California.

We currently serve in Student Ministries and Next Generation Ministries (children's ministry).

The need in New Orleans is evident. We desire to be used for the salvation of others there.

Please pray for the growth of our faith for His glory. Please pray that we walk out the remainder

of our days in Tempe in wisdom, obedience, and faithfulness. Please pray for unity as a family in preparation for our departure.

## THE MILES FAMILY

Omri & Emily, Chloe (8), Obadiah (7), Jonah (4), Ezekiel (3), Nahshon (1)

God graciously saved me (Omri) in February 2008 and Emily in 1997. Emily has been a member of GBC since 2004 and we met through the church's singles group on June 8, 2008, the night I arrived in Arizona.

I serve as a full-time staff elder and will continue to do so in New Orleans. We get to disciple together

and serve in the young adults ministry. Emily also serves in Next Generation Ministries (the children's ministry). Together, we have prayed, prepared, and pondered church planting in New Orleans for over a decade. It's hard to believe that the time for our departure is so close!

Arizona is the only place that each member of my family has ever called home. Please pray for wisdom and insight as I shepherd them to leave family and friends behind to relocate to a new city. Please pray for continued growth in personal discipline as well as my ability to study and preach God's Word. Please pray for the rooting out of any errant motives in this move for His glory.



## JUDY HEDDENS

God used my son (Derek Robinson) to call me to submit to Christ in 2016.

I currently serve in the children's ministries (NGM), the elder lunch, James study and the Demarest small group.

In joining the NOLA team, I hope God will allow greater service to His church there and help to evangelize the city for His glory. Please pray that my mind and eyes stay fixed on Jesus.

## THE ROBINSON FAMILY

Derek & Pamela, Kess (9), Lee (9), Jehu (8), Imara (6), Manoah (4).

God brought me to faith in 2004 and Pam in 1998. We praise Him daily for His kindness.

I work as a high school English teacher and the owner of [Enjoy Black Coffee Roasters](#) while Pam diligently serves our family, overseeing the affairs of our home. I serve in the young adults ministry and the Trust. Pam serves in the children's ministry, Wellspring, and together we serve in the

young adults ministry, discipling the men and women there.

We look forward to moving to New Orleans. This has been on our hearts since meeting Omri in 2008. Please pray for delight and satisfaction in God's word and Him alone. Please pray for wisdom in the stewardship of our home and a job in New Orleans.



## THE SCHNEIDER FAMILY

Matthew & Janelle, Uriah Matthew (6), Faith Elizabeth (4), Lydia Francine (3), Daniel (1)

I work in construction sales while Janelle homeschools our children and cares for our home. The Lord has seen fit for us to serve in Next Generation Ministries (the children's ministry), small group, music, and coffee table ministries. I am also a seminary student at [The Expositors Seminary](#) (Tempe).

We look forward to the labor awaiting us in New Orleans. I (Matt) plan to serve as the Minister of Music for the church.

Please pray for courage and wisdom moving forward.



# THE AFFIRMATION

The elders of Grace Bible Church are pleased to commend Omri Miles, his family, and his team to the task of church-planting in New Orleans.

Omri has desired to see a church birthed in his hometown since I have known him, yet he has patiently submitted himself to the rigors of preparation for over a decade in order to be well-equipped for that task.

Omri completed (and subsequently taught) in the several layers of our men's discipleship programs, acquired a master's degree in biblical counseling, completed an M.Div. with Grace Bible Institute, and finished an M.Div. with The Expositors Seminary.

Omri has faithfully and fruitfully served as a ministry leader, a deacon, a preacher and teacher, and an elder in numerous official capacities, in addition to an uncountable array of unofficial evangelistic, discipleship, shepherding, and service ministries in our church.

His home life as a single man, as a married man, and as a father have been exemplary. The Miles family is a delight to be around and a model to be followed.

They go out from Grace Bible Church with the full approval and commissioning of our elders and church body. Omri is one of our staff pastors, and it is not without cost that he and his family are being sent to New Orleans. Yet we as a church count it a privilege to participate in an impossible task with a guaranteed outcome. And as we cut off our right arm, as it were, and send it to New Orleans, we pray with Revelation 5:9 in view, "May the Lamb receive the reward of His suffering."

We ask that you consider participating with them by personally participating in the church plant in New Orleans, by prayer, or by finances. Thank you for your kind consideration in this matter and please contact me if you have any questions in this regard.

Smedly Yates,

Pastor/Elder of Grace Bible Church (Tempe, AZ)

On behalf of the Elders of Grace Bible Church

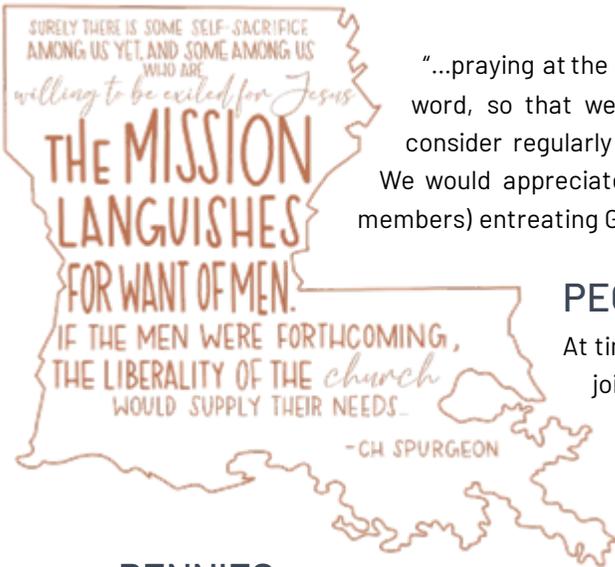
# THE NEED

## PRAYER

"...praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ" (Col. 4:3). Would you consider regularly keeping Grace Bible Church before your congregation in prayer? We would appreciate having many churches corporately (as well as their individual members) entreating God on our behalf.

## PEOPLE

At times, God has been pleased to work in the hearts of his people to join missionary endeavors as co-laborers (Acts 16:1-3). Are there faithful men and women in your church who might desire to support this church plant by joining us in our labors in New Orleans? Would you consider sending them?



## PENNIES

God is glorified when his people contribute generously to support the advancement of his gospel (2Cor. 9:12-13). Being fully convinced that God will receive glory through his church in New Orleans East and that, as our Lord said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35), we do not seek the gift itself, but our greatest desire is the benefit and blessing of those who partner with us in this work (Phil. 4:17).

By operating at minimal costs, we hope to be able to function at a fraction of the budget of well-established churches during the early years of ministry. Recognizing that (1) the preaching and teaching of God's word and Sunday's corporate gatherings are central in the life of the church, (2) New Orleans East is a low-income area and our target population has less means for supporting ministry, and (3) it takes time to teach a church to give generously, our goal is to raise support for the first several years. Our support goal for year 1 includes operating and startup costs and is outlined below. Would you consider partnering with us?

### Start up costs = \$25,000

- Legal/entity set up
- Equipment
- Marketing/signage
- Core team moving expenses

### Operating Costs = \$165,000

- Pastoral salary + insurance
- Ministry expenses
- Facility rent
- Administrative (software, subscriptions, books/resources, accounting, etc.)
- Supplies

Year 1 total = \$190,000

## GIVING OPTIONS

**CHECK.** This is a preferable means of giving since it ensures that 100% of the funds received go directly toward ministry use. Checks can be mailed to P. O. Box 24338  
New Orleans, LA 70124-3900

**ONLINE.** One-time and recurring donations can be made at <https://gracebiblenola.org/give/>. Donors should be aware that 2-3% of their donation will go to our online merchant for processing fees.