



From the Heart: The First Letter to the Flock

*Called to make fully-devoted followers of
Jesus Christ:*

*Inwardly Strong
and
Outwardly Focused.*

October 15, 2023
Sanctuary, 8:15 a.m.

*First Presbyterian Church of Tulsa
Born by grace in 1885*

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

Sanctuary, 8:15 a.m.

The Words of Preparation

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace. We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before our God and Father (1) *your work of faith* and (2) *labor of love* and (3) *steadfastness of hope* in our Lord Jesus Christ. I Thessalonians 1:1-3

...Let us put on *the breastplate of faith and love*, and for a *helmet, the hope of salvation*. I Thessalonians 5:8

The Prelude

Those who trust in the Lord are as a strong mountain; they will not, not be moved. Those who trust in the Lord are as a strong mountain; they will not, not be moved.

Though the world moves like mad, You alone are faithful — Jesus, You, You will not, not be changed.

Christ the King sets my feet on a strong foundation; they will not, not be moved. Christ the King sets my feet on a strong foundation; they will not, not be moved. *Refrain.*

Oh, those who trust in the Lord are as Mount Zion. They will not, not be moved. Oh, those who trust in the Lord are as Mount Zion. They will not, not be moved. *Refrain.*

The Welcome

Dr. Miller

(Please sign, pass, and return the blue Friendship Register)

The Call to Worship

Join me in the great apostle's exhortation:

Rejoice in the Lord —always! Again, I will say it: rejoice!

Let your gentleness be known to everyone —for the Lord is near.

Because the Lord is near, Paul goes further in his counsel:
Do not worry about anything —but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

Philippians 4:4ff

The psalmist puts it this way: Come, sing to the Lord....make a joyful noise to Him with songs of praise! Lift up your hearts —and your voices-- and sing to the Lord!
Alleluia! Amen!

Psalm 95

◆ The Hymns of Joy

Rejoice

The Worship Team

Rejoice in the Lord now and always; sing it again, we rejoice! Delight in the love He has shown us, gratefully lift up your voice. His gentleness among us will join our hearts with praise. We gather in his goodness, a family of grace.

With each breath he's given, praise the Lord! In these times we live in, we will praise the Lord; throughout every season, I am sure, we have every reason to praise the Lord!

Rejoice and be anxious for nothing, praying for all that you need. Come with a song of thanksgiving, lay your requests at His feet. His peace will fall upon us, to guard our hearts and minds. In Christ who reigns eternal —the Shepherd of our lives. *Refrain.*

Rejoice in the Lord now and always, tell of the good He has done. Worship the Lord to remember all of the joy yet to come; the hope that burns within us the dark cannot destroy. With praise that's never ending, we say again: rejoice! *Refrain.*

Now Thank We All Our God

Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things has done, in whom this world rejoices;

Who, from our mothers' arms, has blessed us on our way with countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.

O may this bounteous God through all our life be near us, with ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us; and keep us in his grace, and guide us when perplexed, and free us from all ills in this world in the next.

All praise and thanks to God, the Father now be given, the Son and Spirit blest, who reign in highest heaven. The one eternal God, whom heaven and earth adore; for thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore.

◆ **The Prayer of Adoration**

The Rev. James Estes

The Old Testament Reading Deuteronomy 30:15-20

Today I set before you life and death –depending on whether you obey or disobey. I have commanded you today to love the Lord your God, to follow his paths and to keep his laws, so that you will live and become a great nation, and that the Lord your God will bless you and the land you are about to possess.

But if your hearts turn away and you won't listen—if you are drawn away to worship other gods— then I declare to you this day that you shall surely perish; you will not have a long, good life in the land you are going in to possess.

I call heaven and earth to witness against you that today I have set before you life or death, blessing or curse.

O that you would choose life; that you and your children might live! Choose to love the Lord your God and to obey him and to cling to him, for He is your life and the length of your days. You will then be able to live safely in the land the Lord promised your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The Prayer of Confession

Merciful God, Author of Life and every blessing: You have drawn near and called us to Yourself. But like ancient Israel, our hearts are fickle; we easily turn away. Our ears become deaf to your voice –our eyes blind to your presence. Our lives are scrambled by sin. Lord, in your mercy, forgive our sins and give us the power to comprehend the breadth and length, the height and depth of Your love —and to experience that Love –supremely given in the person and work of Your Son, Jesus, our Savior. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayers... *(in silence)*

The Reminder O the Deep, Deep, Love of Jesus Trevor Manor
Gloria Women's Ensemble

O the deep, deep love of Jesus –vast, unmeasured, boundless, free, rolling as a mighty ocean in its fullness over me! Underneath me, all around me is the current of thy love, leading onward, leading homeward, to thy glorious rest above. O the deep, deep love of Jesus: spread his praise from shore to shore! How he loveth, ever loveth, changeth never, nevermore; how he watches o'er his loved ones, died to call them all his own; how for them he intercedeth, watcheth o'er them from the throne. O the deep, deep love of Jesus! Love of every love the best: 'Tis an ocean vast of blessing, 'tis a haven sweet of rest. O the deep, deep love of Jesus! 'Tis a heaven of heavens to me; and it lifts me up to glory, for it lifts me up to thee.

The Invitation to Embrace Good News

In a single sentence the Apostle Paul presents the gospel: *"God was in Christ,"* he says, *"reconciling the world to Himself."* Friends, this is the great, good news! Embrace Him with all of your hearts –for in Jesus Christ there is forgiveness –for all who call upon Him!
Alleluia! Amen!

◆ **The Response**

Now let the heavens be joyful, let earth the song begin, let the round world keep triumph, and all that is therein. Let all things seen and unseen their notes of gladness blend, for Christ the Lord is with us –our joy shall have no end!

◆ **The Affirmation of Faith** The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. AMEN.

The Joys and Concerns of the Church

The Offertory Morning by Morning

Daily, daily I surrender; grace for today is all that I need. Surprised by a mercy that's new every morning. Awaken my soul to sing. O awaken my soul to sing.

I will trust where You lead. I will trust when I can't see. Morning by morning, great is Your faithfulness to me.

Breath by breath, overtaken by wonder. One step at a time when I'm overwhelmed. Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow. Awaken my soul to sing. Awaken my soul to sing.

I will trust where You lead. I will trust when I can't see. Morning by morning, great is Your faithfulness to me. I will trust with all my heart, You are good, You always are. Morning by morning, great is Your faithfulness to me.

All fear be reminded, my future is secure. My Father has spoken and He keeps His every word. *Refrain*

The New Testament Reading Ephesians 3:14-19

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, He may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through His Spirit – that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

The Sermon From the Heart: Letters to the Flock (1)

May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith.... Eph. 3:17

The Invitation to the Table

The Words of Institution

The Prayer of Blessing

The Sharing of the Bread and Cup

The Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

◆ **The Hymn** 443 O Christ, the Great Foundation AURELIA

◆ **The Postlude** Improvisation on *Now Thank We All Our God*

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A heartfelt welcome to each and all as we gather in this House of Prayer. If you're here for the first time, we pray you'll sense the presence of Christ and the warmth of this congregation.

The flowers that adorn the Sanctuary today are given to the glory of God and in memory of James R. Eagleton, Sr. by his family.

Our *Letter of Blessing* today goes to Mr. and Mrs. Austin and Courtney Stember.

Today

Stewardship: a season of prayerful and intentional consideration of our blessings –and how we might faithfully “steward” them in ways that serve the Lord’s purposes. The Session is already examining the 2024 FPC budget. Thank you for taking the local church seriously and giving of your very best to the Master. In this transition time, your support in prayer and giving is vital.

Thank you for your faithful support of the ministries of First Church! Weekly tithes and offerings to the Lord may be given electronically at firstchurchtulsa.org, text 405-276-4141 or by using the QR code below.



Thanks for your ongoing prayers in this time of transition. Dr. Miller’s retirement is set for Reformation Sunday, October 29. For the next two Sundays, our worship schedule is as follows, beginning today:

Sunday, October 15 and 22

Dr. Miller begins a three week sermon series today:

From the Heart: Letters to the Flock

Today and October 22:

Worship times: (only three services):

8:15 Sanctuary

11:00 Sanctuary

11:00 Great Hall (TIF) sermon simulcast

October 29: Reformation Sunday

Festival Sunday: one service, 11:00 Sanctuary

A very helpful look into the future of pastoral leadership here at FPC can be found at firstchurchtulsa.org; look for the highlighted word “transition”. If you have questions, concerns or comments, please don’t hesitate to reach out to any of the members of the Transition team by sending your inquiries to FPCTransition@firstchurchtulsa.org.

Pastoral Prayer - Join us as we pray for the pastoral transition! If you’re interested in receiving a weekly prayer prompt, please text “81010” to [@pastorfpc](https://www.instagram.com/pastorfpc). You will receive a prayer prompt delivered via text message each Tuesday at 7:09 a.m. that will encourage you to pray in a specific way for the week. Each week will follow the path of pastoral transition, as we walk it together as a congregation at First Church.

Gifts to the Millers – There are many ways to express gratitude and celebration! If you are so inclined to give any physical or monetary gift, please give directly to the Millers. (IRS and Board of Pension rules and regulations do not allow for the church to receive funds and then pass them on to Jim and Diane.) However, if you would like to make a tax-deductible gift in Dr. Miller’s honor, Jim and Diane ask that members consider the *Pastor’s Pilgrimage Fund*.

Pastor’s Class today (and next Sunday) at 9:30 a.m. in Stephenson Hall focuses on Rebecca McLaughlin’s last chapter of her book, *Confronting Christianity*. The chapter is titled: *Why Would a Loving God Send People to Hell?* Dr. Miller leads the discussion.

Registration is now open for the Children’s Nativity Musical! The nativity musical is open to children aged 3 through high school. This year, it will be presented twice: Wednesday, Dec. 20 at 6:00 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 24 at the 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service. Rehearsals are on Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m., starting November 5. Scan the QR code to register – the deadline is Thursday, November 2.



Events This Week

Wednesday Night Downtown

Dinner at 5:15 p.m. in Stephenson Hall – Class starts at 6:15 p.m.

Join us next Wednesday at 6:16 p.m. in Stephenson Hall to hear Dr. Miller's reflections on the last 31 years.

Pastors Fun Night – This Wednesday, October 18 --Stephenson Hall. A night of fun and frivolity for the whole family –presented by the pastors (!)! An optional dinner is available at 5:15 p.m. followed by an evening of great entertainment. Click on the QR code to reserve and prepay for your meal. There is no childcare.



Mark Your Calendar

Deacons Day of Care - Saturday, October 28. Teams will deploy to the home of First Church members who have requested help with yard work and light home-maintenance jobs. To offer your help, use the QR code. To request a team to visit your home on October 28, please call Julie Steiner at 918-640-6955.



Fall Festival at Loughridge! Sunday afternoon: Oct. 22, from 3:30 - 6:00 p.m. Come and celebrate friends and family with fun activities for all ages. The *First Church Pitmasters* are preparing barbeque and there are hayrides, music, and trunk or treat. Dinner: \$9 for adults, \$5 for children, \$22 for families –and free for children 3 and under.

Avoid the long lines and prepay for your meal by clicking on the QR code below or visiting the table in the atrium today or next Sunday, October 15.



Support Camp Loughridge at the Fall Fundraiser on Friday, November 3, at 6:30 p.m. in the Temple Conference Center at Camp Loughridge. A festive evening with friends, dinner, music and a silent auction. Register online or at the atrium table.

Spiritual Retreat – on Saturday, November 11, from 8:30 a.m. -2:30 p.m. in the Miller Library. Join us in for a spiritual retreat led by Rev. Julia Metcalf where we'll focus on various prayer methods of offering our prayers to God. The cost for this event is \$10 and includes breakfast and lunch. More details to come. To register and reserve your spot, click on the QR code.



Book Table Annual Sale – on Sundays, November 12 and 19, from 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. in the atrium. Visit the book table in the atrium and choose from an array of titles on sale for one to five dollars.

Keith and Kristyn Getty and their band return to First Church on Monday, December 4 at 7:00 p.m. for their ***Sing! An Irish Christmas*** concert tour!! Tickets are on sale now at www.firstchurchtulsa.org/Getty23. Adults are \$10 each; free tickets are available for children 17 and under, with the purchase of an adult ticket. Young adults 18 - 21 can attend free with an ID; an RSVP is required. Tickets are going fast, so don't wait!

Ministry Opportunities

Young Adults – First Church is committed to cultivating faith within the next generation, providing a place for young adults to connect with one another and with the larger church. Find us on Facebook, Instagram at [@fpcyoungadults](https://www.instagram.com/fpcyoungadults), or contact Rev. Julia Metcalf at 918-301-1030.

Parish Register

Prayers for Healing: Jane Azlin, Steve Brill, Pat Brown, Roy Cail, Randy Corelli, Dwight Creveling, Marilyn Davis, Donna Droege, Cecil Drummond, David Dunning, Mary Ann Elliott, Gaye Graeler, Cynthia Hill-Meriwether, Meg Hubler, Warren Hubler, Brenda Johnson, Jeannie Dickey Kelsay, Joyce Kunkel, Carmelitti LeFlore, Amy Lesh, Ann McKellar, Jon Mercer, Jan Miller, Jim Miller, David Osterholt, Bill Peacher, Shari Postier, Lyle Proffitt, Helen Quiring, Carly Rivers, Mary Ruddle, Robert Shaw, Asa Smith, Jane Sneed, Cissy Ssettimba, and Susan Waldie.

Sympathy and Prayers to: Denise Cottrill on the death of her father, George Wilson, on September 20; Bob Bruce on the death of his sister, Nancy Hawkins, on September 23; and to Bette Cromer, whose mother, Alice Swanstone, died on September 24.

Worship Notes

Services are broadcast on Cox channel 3 (each Sunday) at 11:00 a.m., 5:00 and 10:00 p.m., on the FPC Facebook page, or *FirstChurchTulsa.org/YouTube*.

Please notify the church if you have a pastoral need, change of address/phone number or other important family news. Contact Kathy Wilson at 918-301-1029 or *kwilson@firstchurchtulsa.org*.

For those who need hearing assistance in the Sanctuary or Stephenson Hall, audio headsets are available from the ushers. Also available are large-print hymnals and Bibles.

First Church Cancer List – Members of the Guild of Intercessors pray every day for those on the Guild's Cancer List. If you'd like to add your name or that of someone else, please contact Paula Peterson at 918-296-5548 or Monte Prater at 918-605-9719/*monteprater@aol.com*.

Military Prayer List – For Veterans Day, the Guild of Intercessors is updating its Armed Forces Prayer List. If you would like the Guild to pray for a loved one or friend who is on active duty, please contact one of these Guild members by October 30: Sandy Curtis at 918-742-6249/*sd.curtis@cox.net*.

First Church's Realm all-church online directory will be activated soon. This secure directory will only be accessible to other First Church members. To access it, members must have logged on to Realm to create an account. If you have not done so yet, you may contact Kathy Wilson at *kwilson@firstchurchtulsa.org* and request a Realm invitation to be emailed to you. If you prefer not to log on but would like all or some of your contact information hidden from other members, please let Kathy know and she can adjust your privacy settings for you.

COME, GROW YOUR FAITH!

TODAY 10/15

- 8:15 am Worship, Sanctuary
9:30 am Christian Apologetics, E104
Cornerstone, Heidelberg Catechism, E102
Covenanters, Driving Through History – Acts to Revelation, E101
Faith and Family, Heidelberg Catechism, E102
Forum, Who is This Man, E200
Harbingers, When the Game is Over, It All Goes Back in the Box, E202
Morning Glory Class, Confronting Jesus, B318
Young Parents, Parenting Series, E205
Pastor's Class, Confronting Christianity, Stephenson Hall
Foundations, Letters of Paul, E104
Reflections, The Intertestamental Period, E103
Shepherds, Bible Study, E203
Sojourners, Jesus in Galilee, E204
The Vine, I John, E100
Westminster Class, 2 Timothy, Tower Room
Young Adults and Ukirk, Bible Study, E201
11:00 am Worship: Sanctuary and Great Hall

Monday 10/16

- 10:00 am Little Lambs, Wiseman Hall
11:30 am Monday School, Kirkland Library
11:45 am Guy's Monday Bible Study, E103
7:00 pm Overtones Rehearsal, Bell Choir

Tuesday 10/17

- 9:30 am Precepts, E100

Wednesday 10/18

- 9:30 am Watercolor the Word – Creative Art Class, E100
11:30 am Pastor's Class, E104
5:15 pm Wednesday Night Dinner, Stephenson Hall
6:00 pm Pastor's Fun Night
6:30 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal, Choir Room

Saturday 10/21

- 8:45 am Before the Rooster Crows, E103