



***Embracing the Mystery:
God's Great Drama
and the Church's Role***

*Called to make fully-devoted followers of Jesus Christ:
Inwardly Strong
and
Outwardly Focused.*

**NOVEMBER 7, 2021
8:30 AM
STEPHENSON HALL**

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

Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Stephenson Hall, 8:30 a.m.

Words of Preparation

Jesus' love was a love that manifested itself in self-sacrifice. He offered himself for others. His offering and sacrifice fulfilled all of the ritual sacrifices of the Old Testament. The sweetest fragrance, the most beautiful aroma that God has ever detected emanating from this planet, was the aroma of the perfect sacrifice of Jesus that was offered once and for all on the cross. As Christ imitated the Father, so we are called to imitate him. We do that when we live a life of love. R.C. Sproul, *The Purpose of God: Ephesians*

Prelude

Graves into Gardens

I searched the world but it couldn't fill me. Man's empty praise and treasures that fade are never enough. Then You came along and put me back together, and every desire is now satisfied here in Your love.

Oh, there's nothing better than You. There's nothing better than You. Lord, there's nothing, nothing is better than You.

I'm not afraid to show You my weakness. My failures and flaws, Lord, You've seen them all and You still call me friend. 'Cause the God of the mountain is the God of the valley, and there's not a place Your mercy and grace won't find me again. *Refrain*

You turn mourning to dancing. You give beauty for ashes. You turn shame into glory; You're the only one who can. You turn graves into gardens. You turn bones into armies. You turn seas into highways; You're the only one who can. *Refrain*

Invitation to Worship

Rescuer

There is good news for the captive; good news for the shamed.
There is good news for the one who walked away. There is good
news for the doubter, the one religion failed, for the good Lord
has come to seek and save.

*He's our Rescuer. He's our Rescuer. We are free from sin
forevermore. Oh, how sweet the sound. Oh, how grace abounds.
We will praise the Lord our Rescuer.*

He is beauty for the blind man; riches for the poor. He is
friendship for the one the world ignores. He is pasture for the
weary; rest for those who strive. Oh, the good Lord is the way the
truth the life. Yes, the good Lord is the way the truth the life.

Refrain

So come and be chainless; come and be fearless; come to the foot
of Calvary. There is redemption for every affliction, here at the
foot of Calvary. So come and be chainless; come and be fearless;
come to the foot of Calvary. There is redemption for every
affliction, here at the foot of Calvary. *Refrain*

Welcome

Thank You

Thank You for Your kindness. Thank You for Your mercy. Thank
You for the cross; thank You for the price You paid.

Thank You for salvation. Thank You for unending grace. Thank
You for Your hope. Thank You for this life You give.

*There is no one like You. There is no one like You, God. All my
hope is in You, Jesus, Jesus.*

Thank You for Your promise. Thank You for Your favor. Thank
You for Your love; everything You've done for me. *Refrain*

To Your Name we give all the glory. To Your Name we give all the praise. You're alive, our God everlasting; let Your face shine on us. *Refrain*

First Reading

Jeremiah 29:4-7

Dr. Wes Vander Lugt

Prayer of Confession

Yahweh

Take these shoes, click clacking down some dead end street; take these shoes and make them fit. Take this shirt, polyester white trash made in nowhere; take this shirt and make it clean, clean. Take this soul, stranded in some skin and bones; take this soul and make it sing.

Yahweh, Yahweh. Always pain before a child is born. Yahweh, Yahweh. Still I'm waiting for the dawn.

Take these hands, teach them what to carry. Take these hands, don't make a fist. Take this mouth, so quick to criticize; take this mouth, give it a kiss. Still waiting for the dawn. *Refrain*

Take this city, a city should be shining on a hill; take this city if it be your will. What no man can own, no man can take. Take this heart. Take this heart. Take this heart and let it break.

The Assurance of Pardon

Our God is a God who can take our hands, our hearts, our minds, our feet and wash them clean for His use. Friends, hear and believe the good news of the gospel. In Jesus Christ, there is indeed forgiveness for all those who call upon Him!

Alleluia! Amen!

The Doxology

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise Him, all creatures here below; praise Him above, you heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. AMEN.

The Affirmation of Faith

(The Heidelberg Catechism, Question 1)

Q. What is your only comfort in life and death?

A. That I am not my own, but belong with body and soul, both in life and in death, to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ.

He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from all the power of the devil. He also preserves me in such a way that without the will of my heavenly Father not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, all things must work together for my salvation.

Therefore, by his Holy Spirit he also assures me of eternal life and makes me heartily willing and ready from now on to live for him.

Scripture Reading Ephesians 5:1-14

Sermon The Sweetness of the Cross

Rev. Wally Johnson

The Celebration of Communion

Words of institution

Prayer of Blessing

Sharing of the Bread and Cup

Joys and Concerns of the Church

Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer

Closing Song

God So Loved

Come all you weary, come all you thirsty, come to the well that never runs dry. Drink of the water; come and thirst no more. Come all you sinners, come find His mercy, come to the table He will satisfy. Taste of His goodness. Find what you're looking for. For God so loved the world that He gave us His one and only Son to save us. Whoever believes in Him will live forever.

Bring all your failures, bring your addictions, come lay them down at the foot of the cross. Jesus is waiting there with open arms.

For God so loved the world that He gave us His one and only Son to save us. Whoever believes in Him will live forever. The power of hell, forever defeated, now it is well, I'm walking in freedom. For God so loved God so loved the world.

Praise God, praise God, from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him, praise Him for the wonders of His love. *Refrain*

Charge and Benediction

Congregational Meeting

Sunday, November 7, 2021

Election of Officers

Each year the congregation is charged with identifying leadership within this family of faith. A nominating team gathers to wait upon the Lord, consider the needs of the Church, and present to the congregation their sense of the Lord's leading. It is hard to overemphasize the importance of this task. It is one of the most significant responsibilities delegated to any committee.

We are grateful for the special and prayerful consideration that the 2021 Nominating committee brought to this task and we offer to the congregation the following persons whom we believe God is calling into specific leadership positions within First church:

Elders – 2024

Laurel Baird
Allison Biggs
Mark Brown
Larry Ewing
Stephanie Madsen
Urbanus Masaku
Steve Metcalf
Paul Mungai
Denise Rounds
Karen Woolman

Deacons – 2024

Tina Aruna
Sandy Curtis
Bette Cromer
Quentin Franklin
Carter Mathews
Valentine Ndunga
Buddy Neal
Dan Richmond
Grace Shelton
Scott Swanson

Trustees – 2024

Jane Crain
Pam Farris
Steve Caldwell

2022 Nomination Committee

Janet Bull
Jenni Dollahon
Bill Huffman
Phil Rounds
Barbara Sanders
Porter Shults
Solomon Tsuma

With gratitude to the 2021 Nominating Committee:

Dru McQueen, Chair, Dacia Bird, Vice-Chair, Linda Campbell, Taylor Conley, Jan Creveling, Sam DeVore, Julianne Hand, Juddy Kanyeke, Holbrook Lawson, Gary Mathews, Mike Miller, Jennifer Morgan, Jennifer Philp, Jason Pugh, David Raybourn, Carol Rowland, Amy Scheiper

Sermon Notes:

Ephesians 5:1-14

Paul begins this chapter with another “*therefore*”. In brief he is saying, *because of what God has done –we are called to live differently: sacrificially, walking in love, forgiving as we have been forgiven.*

So what does faith have to do with works? We can easily conclude that the answer is “nothing,” that works are excluded from faith. After all, Paul makes clear that we’re “*saved by grace through faith (and that this is not our own doing)*” –so what possible difference could my actions really make in all of this?

Think of yourself as a farmer for a moment, cultivating the blessings that have been given to you. The farmer is gifted with fertile soil, a warm sun, soft rain. All of these (and many more!) are God-given. Without them farmer could do nothing. But the farmer knows God’s blessings are intended to be cultivated. There are specific practices, vital and necessary practices, that are essential to ensure a fruitful crop. Together, God’s gifts and our proper use of them, our collaborative efforts, cause a joyful harvest.

God’s gifts *without our cultivation of them* do not bring about His intended harvest.

So Paul is not reluctant to use imperatives when it comes how we should live. A quick glance at Romans chapter 12 (and Paul’s 25 commands) should dispel any notion that God’s grace in salvation means no collaborative effort on our part.

In Ephesians 5:3-5, Paul speaks cautionary words that we need to take seriously. The culture in which he writes is similar in so many respects to our own: savvy, informed, prosperous, prone to license and immorality, dismissive of any direction when it comes to ethics.

But Ephesians 5:10 puts everything in focus: “*Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord*” –*and do that!* This is low-hanging fruit –available to each of us and all of us! It can set our ethical compasses toward true north.

Evelyn Underhill, a deeply devout English writer, puts it this way:

I feel the regular, steady, docile practice of corporate worship is of the utmost importance for the building-up of your spiritual life.....No amount of solitary reading or prayer makes up for humble immersion in the life and worship of the church.

Worship Notes

Welcome to worship! We gather by Christ's invitation to feed on His Word, open our hearts to His presence, and pray for the Holy Spirit's empowering.

A special and heartfelt welcome to those here for the first time. We pray you might sense the presence of Christ and the warm welcome of this congregation.

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

The flowers in today's Sanctuary worship are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Dick and Barbara Horkey, given by Elaine Horkey.

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* or text 405-276-4141. You will also find offering plates located at the back of each worship space.

For those who need hearing assistance in the Sanctuary, audio headsets are available from the ushers.

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

Parish Register

Prayers for Healing: Jeanette Anderson, Jane Azlin, Billy Boyd, Pat Brown, Eleanor Carmack, Dwight Creveling, Marilyn Davis, Donna Droege, Wandie and Mary Fitzpatrick, Pat Ford, Luke Fravel, Gary Gilliam, Glenda Goodwin, Gaye Graeler, Cynthia Hill-Meriwether, Mike Hopkins, Meg Hubler, Harvey Hunt, Caroline Fravel Jones, Joyce Kunkel, Annelle Lanford, Carmelitti LeFlore, Amy Lesh, Laurence Mansur, Ann McKellar, Jan Miller, Rosemary Priest, David Osterholt, David Raybourn, Carly Rivers, Zach Rivers, Mary Ruddle, Susan Shults, Robert Shaw, Helen Marie Sisler, Cissy Ssettimba, Sally Stewart, Mary Lee Torbert, Quendy Veatch, Dayne Weierbach, Bill Weinrich, and Jack Williams.

First Church Updates

Thank you for your faithful giving to support the ministries of this congregation!

Your gifts, your energy and your devotion are expressions of the presence of Christ in the world He loves. The Session of First Church is at work on the 2022 budget. Your commitment cards will greatly assist them in their work.

Pastor's reminder: *I'm confident that none of us, standing in the presence of Jesus at the end of time, will ever think: I shouldn't have given as generously as I did to the work of Christ through the His Church. Thank you for your faithfulness and commitment. As we look ahead, let's give of our best to the Master!*

Our annual Congregational Meeting is set for today: to elect officers
--immediately following the 11:00 service in the Sanctuary.

In the footsteps of Jesus! FPC's pilgrimage to Israel: May 25 – June 9. An information gathering meets immediately after worship today in room E104. Dr. Miller leads the discussion.

Festival of Faith: This coming weekend! Dr. Jerry Root, expert on C. S. Lewis. He speaks Saturday night (Nov. 13) at 6:30 p.m. in the Stephenson Hall, and again at 9:30 a.m. in Stephenson on Sunday. Invite your friends!

The Guild of Intercessors Veterans Day Prayer List has been updated. Pick up a copy from the racks in the Narthex or Atrium and join us in praying for these men and women.

Check out the Book Sale in the Atrium. Today! 9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., the Book Table offers books to lift your faith for \$3, \$2, and \$1. The price is hard to beat and the payoff, priceless.

Presbyterian Women Thank Offering luncheon: Thursday, November 11 at noon in the Miller Library. Our guest speaker is our own staff member Kelle Roberts speaking on her Memory Pillow Ministry. Please RSVP to Kathy Wilson at 918-301-1029 or kwilson@firstchurchtulsa.org.

City-Wide Thanksgiving Worship: Monday, November 22, 7:00 p.m. This year we meet at the historic First Baptist Church, North Tulsa, Rev. Anthony Scott, Pastor. 1414 North Greenwood Avenue.

Mark your calendars: Thanksgiving Day Worship, Thursday, November 22, 11:00 in the Kerr Chapel. Following worship, the Deacons host a scrumptious dinner in Stephenson Hall for those who may be alone during the holiday. To make your reservations, contact Kathy Wilson at (918) 301-1029 or kwilson@firstchurchtulsa.org. To sign up online:



Kings in Judaea – a nativity play by Dorothy Sayers, Sunday, December 5 at 5:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Make plans now to bring your family and friends to see Kings in Judaea and stay for dinner and discussion at 6:15 p.m. The play is one of 12 dramas from “The Man Born to be King,” a series written by Sayers depicting specific periods in Jesus’ life. It will be performed by members of First Church, feature songs from a vocal ensemble, and include presentations from Director Bruce Long and Theologian-in-Residence Wes Vander Lugt. Admittance to the play is free and dinner will be \$10. To pay for dinner online:



Dancing toward Delight –Thursday, December 9, 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. in the Lewis Conference Room, 2nd floor of the Bernsen - Join us for an evening of dance instruction, relational reflection, and Christmas cheer led by Wes and Stephanie Vander Lugt. No previous dance experience or partner is necessary, and anyone is welcome to come, learn, and enjoy. Instruction begins promptly at 7:00 p.m. Come early, enjoy some refreshments, and make sure to wear shoes that slide (no rubber soles)! Space is limited, so sign up here to reserve your spot.



The Presbyterian Women's November mission supports the Coffee Bunker, a ministry providing transitional services to veterans. Gifts may be placed in the acrylic cube at the Reception Desk or mailed to Kathy Wilson at the church.

First Church is seeking an administrative assistant who supports the Mission, TIF, and New Member Outreach departments. Candidate must have excellent skills in Word, Excel, and Outlook. The role requires exceptional organizational skills, event coordination, and effective written and verbal communication abilities. Please send your resume to Tonye Briscoe at tbriscoe@firstchurchtulsa.org.

The C. S. Lewis movie *The Most Reluctant Convert*, has been called a *Tour de Force!* Cinemark has extended their viewings for one week starting Thursday, November 12. Bring some friends!

COME, GROW YOUR FAITH!

Adult Classes for NEXT Sunday, 9:30 a.m.

On Site:

Bible Walk	Dr. Jerry Root's class	Stephenson Hall
Cornerstone	Wesley Bible Curriculum	E102
Covenanters	<i>Making Sense of the Bible</i> by Adam Hamilton	E205
Faith and Family	<i>Old Testament Survey</i>	E104
Forum	<i>Who Needs Christmas?</i>	E200
Pastor's Study	Dr. Jerry Root's class	Stephenson Hall
Reflections	Dr. Jerry Root's class	Stephenson Hall
Sojourners (All Ages)	<i>Spiritual Formation through the writings of Teresa Avila</i>	E204
Upper Room	Bible Study	E313
Young Adults (20's and 30's)	Old Testament Survey	E104

On Site and Zoom:

Shepherds	Creeds and Confessions	E203
The Vine (Singles/couples)	<i>The Good and Beautiful God</i>	E100

EVENTS THIS WEEK

Today 11/7/21

- 8:00 a.m. Worship, Kerr Chapel
- 8:30 a.m. Worship, Stephenson Hall
- 9:30 a.m. Gatherings and Classes
- 11:00 a.m. Worship, Sanctuary, Stephenson Hall and Great Hall

Monday 11/8/21

- Guy's Monday Bible Study 11:45 a.m., Room E103
- Monday School 12:00 p.m., KRC
- Little Lambs 10:00 a.m., Outside Playground

Tuesday 11/9/21

- Precept Bible Study 9:30 a.m., Room E100

Wednesday 11/10/21

- Pastor's Study 11:30 a.m., Stephenson Hall
- Youth Praise Band 5:00 p.m., Powerhouse
- WNDT Dinner 5:15 p.m., Stephenson Hall
- Gloria Choir 5:30 p.m.
- Awana 6:00 p.m.
- POW and Amass Exodus 6:00 p.m., Powerhouse
- Adult Classes 6:15 p.m., Various Locations
- Choir Rehearsal 6:30 p.m. Choir Room

Saturday 11/13/21

- Before the Rooster Crows 8:45 a.m., E103

November 7, 2021
8:30 Stephenson Hall

Please help us with contact tracing and attendance by filling out the information below and leaving this page on your seat as you leave.

Name _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Member _____ or Guest _____

or

going to the link: bit.ly/fpcregister;

or

using the QR code below.



709 SOUTH BOSTON AVENUE
TULSA, OKLAHOMA 74119-1609
918.584.4701 • WWW.FIRSTCHURCHTULSA.ORG