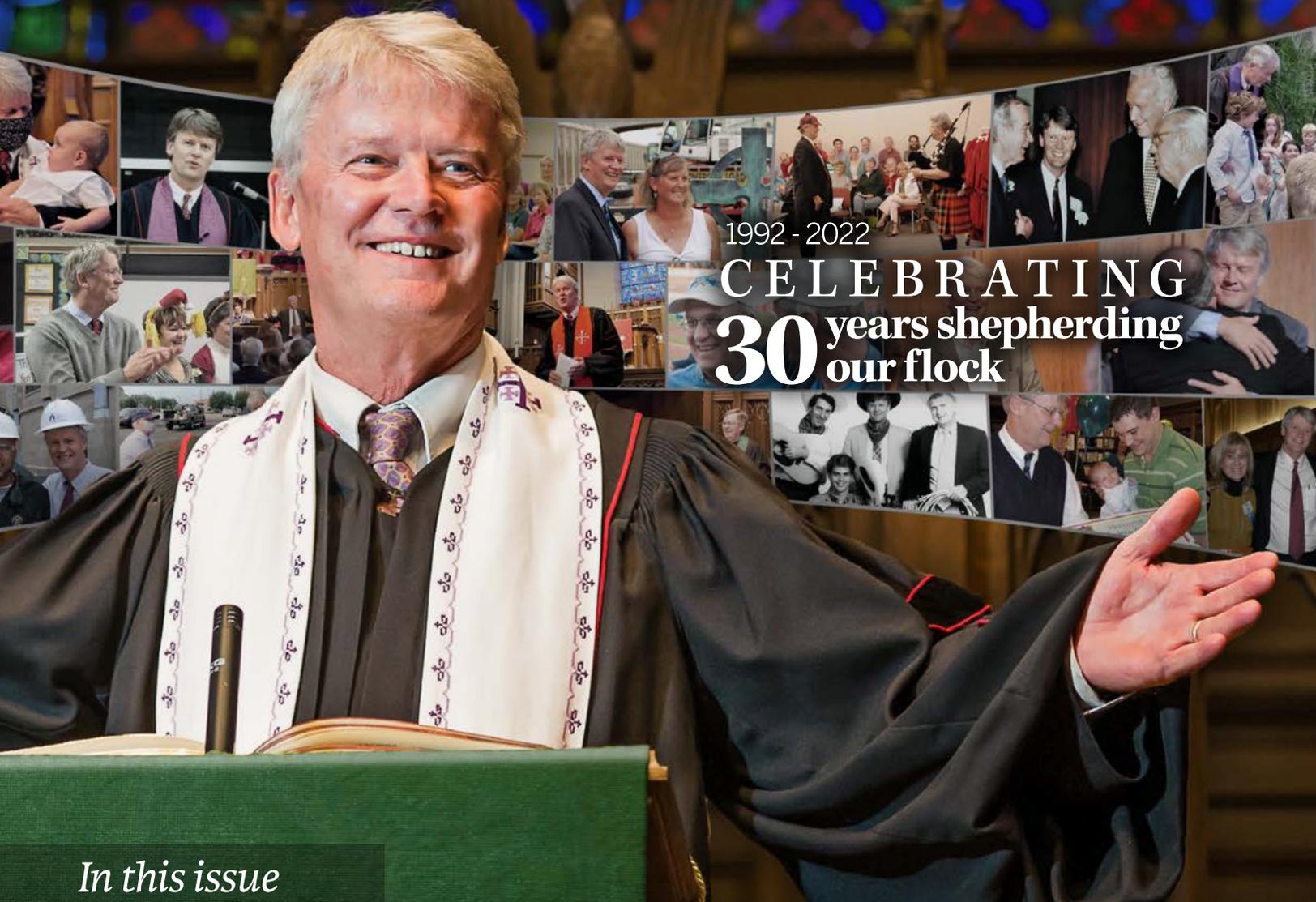


Tidings

VOL. 67, NO. 3 - FALL 2022



1992 - 2022

CELEBRATING 30 years shepherding our flock

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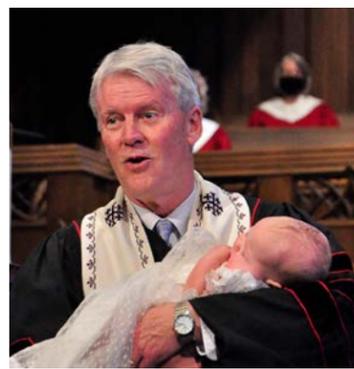
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Jim Miller's influence on me

By Rev. Dan Hutchinson



One of the words of wisdom I received out of seminary was a truth that applies in many professions - make sure you like your boss. In my case, if you are an associate pastor, know that your senior pastor can make or break your experience. He or she might be smart, wise, a good preacher and successful, but that does not mean he or she will be a good overseer.

When I first met **Dr. Jim Miller**, I immediately felt this was someone from whom I had a lot to learn and someone I would really enjoy working with. I can honestly say, after almost 10 years of serving alongside Jim, that I still feel that way. Jim has been and continues to be a mentor, a friend, a colleague and a confidant. And I cannot begin to express all that I have learned from watching him and working alongside him, or my gratitude for these years.

By way of sharing some of the ways Jim has influenced me, I want to offer 10 lessons (in no particular order) that I have learned from him. We might call them "Jim-isms." Each has shaped my ministry and sense of what it means to be a pastor. And, in honor of Jim, some of these will be "flying over the same airfield."

People are more important than programs. I may not have heard these exact words, but I have seen Jim live this truth. I have experienced it personally in his care for me. Whether it is showing up at a hospital bedside, someone's house for a pastoral conversation, or being late to the Vestry before the 11 a.m. service due to a conversation with someone in the Atrium, Jim has reminded me that to be a pastor is to care for people.



We serve a God who bends things to the good. One of my favorite Jim-isms. The best thing is that Jim truly believes this, and he lives it. He lives and preaches the truth of the Gospel and the power of the God we serve. He lives it by his joy, his hope, his encouragement, his presence of peace, and his relentless proclamation of the power of the resurrected Jesus.

Laughter is a sign of health. Whether with staff or the congregation (during children's times in particular), Jim fosters a spirit of playfulness and joy that disarms, brings people together and breaks down barriers. I cannot begin to count the number of staff meetings that have either begun or ended in laughter. It is always good to be reminded that we serve a God of joy and abundance! Even if we are the frozen chosen!

Christianity is not Pollyannaish. Jim does not shy away from the things that are hard. He is always willing to step into difficult conversations, whether around personal conflict, talking about suffering and the sovereignty of God, addressing race relations in our city, or any number of other things. Whatever the question, Jim is led by his faith and a confidence that God is present amid our questions and concerns.

The bulletin is only a guide. Or, sometimes the best ideas come at the last minute. I appreciate how Jim pairs a desire for excellence with flexibility and an openness to the Spirit, even when the timeline is not ours! This includes listening to other people's last-minute ideas, which cannot be said of all leaders.

Never be afraid to quote Lewis! As a pastor, it is good to be reminded that I don't need to make everything up. We stand on the shoulders of giants of the faith who have come before us, and some of my best ideas will come from other people.

The best gifts come wrapped up in flesh and bone. For me the reminder is never to take the people around you for granted. Never be too busy for a conversation or too distracted to be present to someone. Never forget that the people in your life are the greatest gifts God has given to you.

Show up to the funeral. We're flying around the airfield here, but one of the primary things I have learned from Jim is how to care for people. Central to that is what we might call the gift of presence - showing up even if you don't know exactly what you are going to do or say. Jim has modeled the gift and power of presence.

It's important to have the 30,000-foot view. Whether it is in relationships or reading Scripture, it's important to see the whole picture.

Never be ashamed to stand firm for what you believe. In a world where the historic witness of the gospel is coming under fire, I am grateful to have served alongside someone who has stood firm and unwavering with grace and kindness.

Like many others, I am deeply thankful for Jim's influence in my life and in the life of this church. To quote Lewis in "The Last Battle," "Further up, and further in!"



About the author: Dan Hutchinson is the senior associate pastor at First Church. Dan graduated from Princeton Seminary with a Master of Divinity in 2012. He received a B.A. in History from Wheaton College in 2007 and an M.A. in Theology in 2008. He is a third-generation pastor.



With gratitude

Celebrating Dr. Jim Miller's 30 years of service

By Joan Williams Hoar, Historian

Ron Pearson recalls those early days. "When I first met Jim in 1992, he was visiting the church as the guest of our Pastor Nominating Committee, and my first impression was extremely positive. I immediately sensed his outgoing personality, his sharp mind, his vision for the future, and most importantly, his love for the Church, its message, and its people."

“As I look back at the past three decades, I am profoundly grateful for his leadership which has produced an outstanding record of accomplishments.”

– Ron Pearson

Ron says, "The church campus has grown in physical size, which allowed for the expansion of our various ministry areas, our annual budgets have continued to rise thanks to the generous response of members, and the spiritual growth of our congregation bears a powerful witness to Jim's leadership."

Gary Mathews, immediate past clerk of Session, notes Dr. Miller's ability to work with elected church leadership. "I served on Session and in the role of clerk with Dr. Miller since 2005 and observed firsthand his quiet and friendly encouragement of others to serve the Lord in various ways. He has a special way of seeing the potential in others and a skillful way of encouraging people to embrace tasks they would have never pursued on their own."

“His love of people and engaging personality are truly a gift from God.”

– Gary Mathews

Michael Grogan adds, "Dr. Miller is the leader with the gentle nudge. Since my days in high school youth group, he planted seeds that led me on a mission trip to Romania and to be the Heather Davis youth intern one summer. Both were experiences that caused my faith to blossom!"

Duff Points comments, "Spiritual growth begins at the very youngest age with the AWANA Bible Study. Jim is an incredible champion for AWANA. Each Wednesday he stands in the Atrium

after class and hugs and talks to the kids. He is the ultimate shepherd and encourager!"

First Church history records a strong presence in local mission. Executive Director **Jenette McEntire** speaks eloquently of the impact on young lives. "Five years ago on July 24, 2017, Masterwork Academy flung open her doors to welcome the first students from Anderson Elementary. Now, over 220 students have learned they are a Masterwork. Many are children with deep hurts, loss, separation and need. Most would not have an opportunity to engage in the arts or experience the joy of creating if Masterwork didn't exist for them."

“Cast in love and founded in faith, this good work has faithfully grown because of the skillful hands of our shepherd, Dr. Jim Miller.”

– Jenette McEntire

Little Light House Executive Director **Anne McCoy** shares her experience with how our "outward focus" mission has benefited families with special needs children. "Dr. Miller's desire to see First Church serve our community is obvious. The 8:10 Building Project is one such example. I am particularly grateful for the pioneering effort onsite at First Church in collaboration with the Little Light House to serve young children with special needs and their families. For six Wednesday nights this spring, these families were greeted with love, educational and therapeutic input, a great meal and sibling care, all funded by 8:10 proceeds. What a beautiful blessing to the Tulsa community. Thank you, Dr. Jim Miller, for your faithful shepherding."

With appreciation to Vicky Wilcoxon and Doug Crain for their involvement in this article.



About the author:

Joan Williams Hoar is the First Church historian and an elder, chair of the Docents and History & Archives Committee, and a member since 1978. Joan has traveled the globe and her education includes Asian Studies at Sophia University in Tokyo and earned a master's degree in liberal arts with an emphasis on Japanese print and literature from OU.



Metcalf named new associate pastor

By Kim Jones, Personnel Committee Chair

A search that began in the fall of 2021 has culminated in the Session and congregational approval of Julia Metcalf as First Church's new associate pastor. Thank you to the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee, chaired by Elizabeth DeVore, for their hard work over the last six months in evaluating resumes and interviewing candidates to fill this role which will serve the Next Generation ministries.

The daughter of Steve and Jill Metcalf, Julia is a child of First Church and is a familiar face in both the pulpit and choir loft. She holds an undergraduate degree in vocal performance from Belmont University in Nashville and a Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary.

During her studies Julia focused her ministry on youth, serving a year at The American Church in Paris, France, as the pastoral intern for youth and young adults. Most recently, Julia has served First Church as the director of University Ministries and will maintain that role as she joins the Next Generation staff.

Over the next few months, Julia will work closely with Senior Associate Pastor **Dan Hutchinson**, Director of High School Ministries **Steve Wilson**, Director of Middle School Ministries **Jackson Seibert**, and Director of Children's Ministries **Sarah Savage**, in continuing to offer exciting educational and spiritual experiences for our youth and young adults.

"My gratitude to the Lord is overflowing for bringing me back to First Church to serve alongside this wonderful expression of the Body of Christ, and I am thrilled to continue to deepen the beautiful relationships I have developed here over the years as we all seek to love and serve the Lord together."

– Julia Metcalf

In addition to her love of youth, Julia has a deep interest in the spiritual disciplines and leading others into the ability to deepen our personal relationships with Jesus. She is a gifted teacher, and you can expect to see her offering educational opportunities soon.

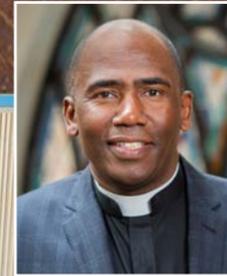
If you do not yet know Julia, I encourage to reach out and get to know this amazing young woman. I am confident you will see the pure joy she has in her heart for the Lord and the blessing she will be for First Church. The Lord has blessed us with such a gift!



About the author:

Kim Jones is a native Tulsa and a graduate of Oklahoma State University. She is a First Church elder and has served as the personnel chair since 2019. Whenever not on the tennis court, Kim and her husband Ricky enjoy spending time with their four granddaughters.

Pastor's Top 10 to read

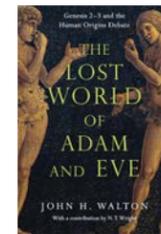


By Rev. Wambugu Gachungi



The Christian in Complete Armour
William Gurnall

Arguably the most significant spiritual and biblical theology ever penned from the English Puritan era, the presentation of William Gurnall's "The Christian in Complete Armour" in an accessible single volume is certainly a landmark, and much welcomed, event.



The Lost World of Adam and Eve
by John H. Walton

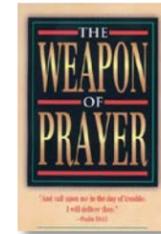
(with contribution by N.T. Wright)

For centuries the story of Adam and Eve has resonated richly through the corridors of art, literature and theology.



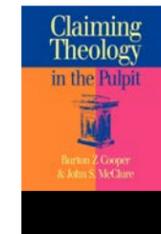
According to Promise
Charles H. Spurgeon

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892) was a British Baptist preacher known as the "Prince of Preachers" and frequently had more than 10,000 people present to hear him preach at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London.



The Weapon of Prayer
E.M. Bounds

It must never be forgotten that Almighty God rules this world. He is not an absentee God. His hand is ever on the throttle of human affairs. He is everywhere present in the concerns of time. "His eyes behold, his eyelids try the children of men." He rules the world just as He rules the church by prayer.



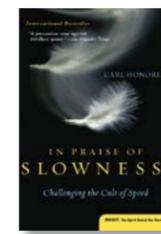
Claiming Theology in the Pulpit
Burton Z. Cooper and John S. McClure

Encapsulating years of experience integrating critical theological thinking with the preaching task, Claiming "Theology in the Pulpit" will be a welcomed resource to both preachers and students.



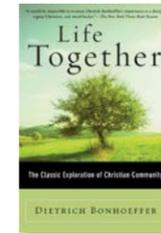
For the Body
by Timothy C. Tennent

An in-depth look at what it means to be created in the image of God and how our bodies serve as icons that illuminate God's purposes instead of ours.



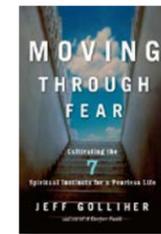
In Praise of Slowness: Challenging the Cult of Speed
Carl Honore

We live in the age of speed. We strain to be more efficient, to cram more into each minute, each hour, each day. Since the Industrial Revolution shifted the world into high gear, the cult of speed has pushed us to a breaking point.



Life Together
by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

After his martyrdom at the hands of the Gestapo in 1945, Dietrich Bonhoeffer continued his witness in the hearts of Christians around the world. His "Letters and Papers from Prison" became a prized testimony to Christian faith and courage, read by thousands.



Moving Through Fear
by Jeff Gollither

A powerful and important new work that will help readers develop their spiritual instincts and move from a life of fear to one of freedom.



The Peacemaker
by Ken Sande

Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers," But it often seems like conflict and disagreement are unavoidable. Serious, divisive conflict is everywhere within families, in the church and out in the world.



What does koinonia mean to you?

By Phillip Bowman

K Group leaders Phil Cromer, Bette Cromer, Phillip Bowman, Elizabeth DeVore and Cam Campbell.

What does Koinonia mean to you? To **Elizabeth DeVore**, one of First Church's Koinonia Group (K Group) leaders, Koinonia means holy, covenantal fellowship. "K Group friendships are just that. We are able to be open and honest with each other and share in diving deeper into God's word," Elizabeth said. You might not know it, but every week, small groups are meeting in homes across town, changing the spiritual lives of its members as they become closer to Christ, and each other.

To **Jan Miller**, a member of Cam Campbell's K Group, "Having people that you can really be vulnerable with is what God had in mind when he saw friendships. Really doing life together, not just surface friendships, not friendships based on what you can do for one another," Jan said. Cam has been leading Jan's group at Dennis and Jan Lee's house for about 20 years. "I think a small group is really important, especially in a church the size of ours. It gives us a chance to have closer personal relationships. The people in that group are some of our best friends, that is what has happened over the years."

"We are just going through life together sharing joys and concerns, praying for each other while we are there."
— Cam Campbell

God's work in Cam's group was never more apparent than when one of their hosts, Jan Lee, was diagnosed with lymphoma. She told her husband Dennis, "I want to keep working and I want to keep my study group." That paid off in a miracle. Jan was unable to keep her platelets up for treatment. After having a blessing done by the group, she never had trouble with her platelets again, and was able to get the treatment she needed. Even the nurse in Houston called it a miracle.

Bette Cromer and her husband **Phil** came to First Church just four years ago, but they jumped into small group leadership very quickly. "I just don't have anything else in the church that gives me that personal bonding, the ability to learn about someone's faith walk as this small K Group ... whether that is being a better listener or sharing a little deeper, it is peeling layers away and sharing deeper and deeper," Bette said about her group.



The Cromer K Group spends time together in fellowship.

Vickie Matthews, a member of Bette's group summed it up like this, "It reminds me to be in the body of Christ and to stay in it, because sometimes it is easy when you are busy to be in your own world, but that group keeps me thinking of others, it is such a close family. It is a group that takes you outside of yourself, keeps you praying for others, it is such a special group."

If these kinds of relationships are missing in your life, they might be waiting for you in a group you have yet to join. Find some friends or acquaintances, ask them if they would like to meet and learn about Christ. There is no substitute for true Christian community. Find out what Koinonia means to you.

Contact **Phillip Bowman**, First Church's K Group coordinator for assistance leading or finding a group today. We are called by God to live in fellowship, start doing that today. Reach Phillip at 918-630-1786 or pbowman@firstchurchtulsa.org.



About the author:
Phillip Bowman serves as the K Group coordinator for First Church, and also runs our Little Lambs and Downtown Theological Roundtable groups. Before joining the staff of the church, Phillip was a stay-at-home dad and also served as a history teacher at Town and Country School.

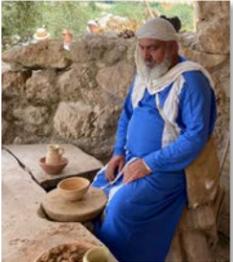
Israel pilgrimage

By Katrina Marie Meacham

In late May through early June of this year, Dr. Jim Miller led a group of 26 pilgrims to the Holy Land. They traveled through historical places that included Nazareth, Galilee and Jerusalem.

Poignant moments of the trip included reaffirmations of baptism in the Jordan River for 13 of the 26 pilgrims, a visit to Jericho where we remember the story made famous by God's mighty act in bringing down the walls, and three couples re-affirmed their wedding vows in a beautiful chapel in Cana. Cana is where we are told in John's gospel that Jesus turned water into wine at a wedding as his first act of authority.

Traveling through this biblically historical country was a life-changing experience for these 26 pilgrims. Our own Ben Peterson was the first recipient of a gift from the Larry and Allison Langholz family to assist young people with the opportunity to go to Israel. While the group was traveling, we here at First Church were given a day-to-day update from Dr. Miller. You can find more in-depth stories about the trip at FirstChurchTulsa.org/Pilgrimage22.



First Church Kids Fall Events

Join First Church Kids for our exciting fall events. For more information, contact **Sarah Savage** in the church office or visit FirstChurchTulsa.org/Grow/Children for details on our ministry.

4th grade Bible presentation
August 21, 9:30 a.m., West parlor

AWANA Kick-Off
Wednesday, September 7, 4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Children's area

AWANA Leaders Training
Wednesday, September 7, 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
(dinner & childcare provided)

AWANA starts
Wednesday, September 14, 6:30 p.m.; Children's area

Embracing the promises of your Lord, Jesus Christ

By Duff Points

The World Is a Tough Place

The last few years have been unsettling. We have faced wars and rumors of war, a global pandemic, unrest, supply chain issues, soaring inflation, business closures, divisive politics and the list goes on.

If you are a student of history, then you likely think back to plagues, famines, wars, financial catastrophes, and the very best and the very worst of leaders through the ages. King Solomon would remind us there is nothing new under the sun (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

When you read the headlines and worry creeps upon you and fear grips your breath, where can you turn for comfort and peace? For truth and the wisdom of God? The church through the ages has pointed us to the Word of God for guidance.



“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

– Joshua 1:9

We live as people with hope

The purpose of this article is to encourage each of us to dive into the Bible with energy and joy to face trials with the strength of God's Word. He has generously given us His story so we might come to know Him fully. Reading, listening, studying, and talking about the scriptures helps us understand and receive the beautiful message of hope and love that reside within the pages of the Bible. Underline verses, write in the margins, pray passages that touch your heart, read it again and again until the pages look crinkled and tired. Here you will find the promises that are life giving and that you can stand upon each day, even the days when the world is tossing out some pretty grim stuff.

Here is one example of Jesus' promises.

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

– John 16:33

Amazing, isn't it?

By being in the Word, you encounter the living Lord! By leaning into this relationship, you discover that you want nothing more than to follow Him.

How First Church can help with this endeavor

The Discipleship Committee of First Church wants to help you grow in your faith and in your role as Christ's devoted disciple. Here are some avenues for you to explore:

- **Sunday School classes for all ages.** We have a dedicated Sunday School hour at 9:30 a.m. for all ages, from the youngest to the oldest disciples. Commit to an hour of worship and an hour of learning each

Sunday. We have many topics and teachers lined up for the semester – this is an excellent opportunity to explore the constructs of faith and discuss them with your fellow followers of Christ.

- **Weekday classes and Bible studies.** Pastor's study (Jim Miller), Monday School (Wally Johnson), a new women's Bible study, Seasons (Julia Metcalf and Sarah Savage), are a few of the many weekday offerings designed to help you go deeper in your knowledge and commitment.
- **Spiritual retreats.** Saturday retreats three to four times per year. Slip away for some quiet time with God as we learn spiritual disciplines that have been practiced by Christians for generations.
- **K Groups.** Enjoy fellowship and authentic friendship within a small group that cheers each other on, prays for one another, studies and experiences life together.

Read E-News and the church website for new classes:
FirstChurchTulsa.org/E-News and FirstChurchTulsa.org/Events

In closing, consider the Good Shepherd's promise below. May it cause you to yearn to study the Word so that you may indeed recognize and listen to the Master's voice, both now and always.

“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.”

–John 10:27-28



About the author:

Duff Points is the executive director of Adult Ministries and has worked for First Church for 11 years. Duff considers this role to be a calling from the Lord and finds great joy in serving alongside such gifted lay leaders, pastors, and staff. When she isn't at 7th and Boston, you will find Duff spending time with friends and family, listening to music or podcasts or walking her devoted border collie, Blue.





Breath as a spiritual discipline

By Julia Metcalf

In the last edition of Tidings, we explored the spiritual disciplines of solitude and silence and how these practices can draw us into closer relationship with Jesus.

When we cultivate time and space to be alone and to find external and internal silence, our hearts often become more attuned to the presence of the Holy Spirit. We can refocus on our identity as beloved children of God. We are able to recenter ourselves with the person and character of Christ being formed in us. We can be filled up with the love of Jesus in a way that allows us to re-enter our lives and pour out that same love onto others.



If you did not get a chance to read our last edition, you can find it on the First Church website at [FirstChurchTulsa.org/stories](https://www.firstchurchtulsa.org/stories). If you have not yet had a chance to explore solitude and silence, I would encourage you to step into them as a spiritual practice and be curious about what might come!

Stepping away from the busyness of life, as Jesus often did within his years of ministry, is invaluable. However, the commitments and movements of our day-to-day might not always allow us to "retreat to the mountainside." (Luke 6:12) But the presence of God is always accessible to us and an intentional practice of pausing to take notice of and tap into the presence of the Holy Spirit is a beautiful part of maintaining our connection with Jesus throughout the day. One ancient tool that we can utilize as an intentional practice of connection is breath prayer.

Scripture teaches us that prayer can take many forms. Yes, it can be spoken words as Jesus exemplifies in Matthew 6:9-13 when he teaches us The Lord's Prayer. Prayer can also be listening through silence and solitude as portrayed in Psalm 46:10, which says, "Be still, and know that I am God;" and John 10:27, saying "My sheep listen to my voice." Prayer even happens through music and song as we communicate our worship to God as Psalm 96 says, "Sing to the Lord a new song!" Could prayer also happen through our breath?

The Holy Spirit is identified as "breath" or "wind" throughout Scripture in both the Hebrew "ruach" and the Greek "pnuema." Physiologically, breath is our constant companion and gives us life. Spiritually, the breath of the Holy Spirit acts as a connection to our source of life.

Continued on next page ...



If we choose to intentionally focus our physical breath as a spiritual practice, this necessary habit becomes a powerful way to pray. It is also a way to step into 1 Thessalonians 5:16 admonition to "pray continually."

Breath prayer is an ancient tool and involves choosing one or two phrases to meditate on and inhale, and then exhale through them. The most utilized prayer is the Jesus Prayer, which is based on the healing miracle of blind Bartimaeus in Mark 10. The practice is simple and can happen anywhere you find yourself.

Inhale. Fill yourself with breath. And then say:

Lord Jesus Christ, son of God.

Exhale slowly and completely, saying:

Have mercy on me, a sinner.

There are many possibilities and iterations of this prayer. Before you begin this practice I encourage you to ask the Holy Spirit to drop a word or phrase into your heart that will provide the nourishment or guidance you need for the day.

Maybe you need grace for the day and your prayer could be:

Inhale - *Your grace ...*

Exhale - *... is enough for me (1 Cor 2:19).*

Perhaps you're hungering for the person of Jesus, and you pray:

Inhale - *Jesus Christ ...*

Exhale - *... be my daily bread.*

Often we need peace and could pray:

Inhale - *Faithful father ...*

Exhale - *... grant me peace.*

I wonder if you might even incorporate a favorite scripture like John 15:

Inhale - *True vine and gardener ...*

Exhale - *... I abide in you.*



My hope and prayer is that this simple tool will become a spiritual practice that takes you deeper into your love and relationship with Christ and brings the presence of the Holy Spirit more powerfully into the moments of your day. The Gettys have given us a beautiful perspective on the power of the living breath, which is in each of us. Take with you the opening words of their song "Holy Spirit, Living Breath of God."

Holy Spirit, living breath of God,
Breathe new life into my willing soul.
Let the presence of the risen Lord,
Come renew my heart and make me whole.



About the author:

Julia Metcalf is the associate minister of our Next Generation Ministry. Julia found her passion for working with young adults while she was an intern at the American Church in Paris. She earned a Master of Divinity from Princeton in 2020.



*Holy Spirit, living breath of God,
Breathe new life into my willing soul.
Let the presence of the risen Lord,
Come renew my heart and make me whole.*

Masterwork Academy students present community showcase

By Laura Voth

In May, Masterwork Academy hosted their first ever showcase event for the community.

Vibrant student artwork covered the walls while proud students ushered parents and church members around the art gallery saying, "Come see what I made!" More than 80 pieces of art hung on display and not a single person left the gallery without a smile on their face.

Transitioning to the ballet studio, students joyfully performed musical numbers, fitness routines and dances for a live audience. The children's chorus loudly sang "praise him, praise him," filling the entire room with delight. And their demonstrations of pushup and high kicks inspired everyone in the audience to get their heart rates moving. Some of the students performed a classical ballet while other kids demonstrated their skillful barre routines.

The event concluded with an upbeat hip hop dance and a standing ovation from the audience.




About the author:
Laura Voth is the visual art instructor for Masterwork Academy where she's been teaching the past five years. Her background is in developing art-based community programs and experiences for people of all ages. Recently, Laura's students have shown their art at Crystal Bridges Museum of Art and Tulsa Mayfest.



Member and staff highlights

Thirty years of church service

By Louann Buhlinger

In honor of Dr. Jim Miller's 30th anniversary at the church, we would also like to honor staffers who have served the church for 30 years or more. Many thanks to these folks who honor us with their work. They include:

- Ron Pearson**, Director of Music Ministries – 48 years
- Tonye Briscoe**, Facilities and Benefits Coordinator – 37 years
- Steve Mitchell**, Facility Manager – 34 years
- James Flynn**, Assistant Facility Manager – 31 years
- Steve Howe**, Accounting Manager – 30 years
- Dr. Jim Miller**, Senior Pastor – 30 years



Ron Pearson



Tonye Briscoe



Steve Mitchell



About the author:
Louann Buhlinger is the communications director of First Church. For 30 years she has served as a chief communications officer, editor and journalist for organizations including TU, Tulsa Public Schools and PennWell publishing.



James Flynn



Steve Howe



Dr. Jim Miller

Keene celebrated for 55 years in choir

By Ron Pearson

Fifty-five years of wearing a robe on Sunday – a choir robe, that is. It has been said that singing in a church choir can be a lifetime experience, and our own **Jan Keene** has provided ample evidence of this. Jan began her service to the Chancel Choir in the mid-1960's and thus began a 55-year stretch when she was rarely absent from the choir loft on Sunday morning. Jan was always a cheerful presence in choir rehearsals and social gatherings, and it was my pleasure to work with her as she took her place in the Alto section. When I think of who might be seen as a shining example of faithful and steady service to a volunteer organization such as a church choir, Jan Keene stands out.



About the author:
Ron Pearson received a Bachelor of Music from Concordia College in 1972, and a Master of Music degree from the University of Michigan in 1974. He joined the church staff as organist in 1974 and assumed the combined music director/organist position in 1995. He has also been Adjunct Instructor of Organ at TU.



Ron Pearson honors Jan Keene with an award at the 2022 Choir Dinner.



49th Annual
ORGAN CONCERT
BY
RON PEARSON

Ron Pearson's 49th Annual Organ Concert

All are invited to the 49th Annual Organ Concert presented by **Ron Pearson**, Music Director and Organist at First Church Tulsa, on Sunday, October 9, at 4:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. This year's program will include the participation of The University of Tulsa Chamber Orchestra in a performance of the Concerto for Organ and String Orchestra, by Canadian composer Denis Bedard. This will be the first-ever performance in Oklahoma of this exciting five-movement work. Everyone is invited to stay for a reception in the Atrium following the concert.



Live choir concerts return

The Chancel Choir is returning to performing live concerts after a two-year hiatus. Mark your calendars to attend the **Chancel Choir Fall Concert 2022**, on Sunday, November 6 at 5 p.m. The "Mostly Mozart" concert will include the full choir and professional orchestra. Selections will include the Coronation Mass, Laudamus Te from the Great Mass in C minor, and several more choral favorites. Stay for a reception in the Atrium.



New confirmands

By *Katrina Meacham*

The confirmation of baptismal vows is a time of celebration and reflection on the part of the confirmand. Here at First Church our Senior High Ministries director, Steve Wilson, has endeavored to create confirmation as educational as well as fun. His driving force is a desire for all students to have a close and personal relationship with Jesus Christ, in this loving faith community called First Church.

This year 10 students, mostly freshmen in high school, came together starting in January and met weekly through April. While learning about church history, what it means to be a Christian, and what it means to be a Presbyterian. They also had to grapple with their own beliefs by writing down their answers to these questions:

- **What does it mean for you personally to believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior?**
- **What does it mean for you personally to believe in Jesus Christ as your Lord?**
- **What does it mean for you personally to trust in God's grace and love?**
- **In what ways do your belief and trust in Jesus shape and guide the way you live?**
- **What does it mean for you to be a faithful member of the Church as part of the body of Christ?**
- **In what ways have you found it challenging to be a disciple of Jesus?**

Once they had tackled these questions in written form, they met with the Session to discuss their faith journeys and beliefs. What a wonderful way to state your beliefs and share them with the leadership of the church at a pivotal point in growing up.



Confirmands Josiah Price, Luke Lofton, Jonas Brown, Henry Savage, Kyne Wilberforce, Anna Simon, Lauren Woodard and Charles Haskell. Not pictured are Matthew Kendrick and Henry Simon.

Congratulations to Jonas Brown, Charles Haskell, Matthew Kendrick, Luke Lofton, Josiah Price, Henry Savage, Anna Simon, Henry Simon, Kyne Wilberforce and Lauren Woodard. They all were confirmed on Thursday, May 5, 2022, during a commitment and prayer service and presented to the congregation on Sunday, May 8, 2022.



About the author:
Katrina Marie Meacham is the communications coordinator at First Church. She earned an M.Div from Perkins School of Theology at SMU. She has served as a youth minister and has over 10 years of communications experience at Woodland Hills Mall and Tots to Tweens.



2022 Ignite interns

By *Katrina Meacham*

This summer First Church was blessed with three Ignite interns including Lucas Brown, Ian Kanyeki and Kelsey Wilberforce. They brought their love of Christ and desire to be closer to Him not only to our youth programming but also to the church at large.

As part of their nine-week internships, they learned how to be the hands of Christ through teaching at T.I.N.A., the Pathfinders Wednesday night program, leading in worship as lectors and assisting in many areas of First Church life. In addition, they practiced the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, reading "Practice the Presence of God" by Brother Lawrence and "Lead Small" by Reggie Joiner and Tom Shefchunas.

Lucas Brown is a senior at Booker T. Washington High School who enjoys running cross country. Ian Kanyeki is a junior at Jenks High School and loves to play drums for the Tulsa International Fellowship music ministry. Kelsey Wilberforce is a junior at Jenks High School where she runs track.

We are grateful for their ministry here at First Church.



Steve Wilson, director of high-school ministries, with 2022 Ignite interns Kelsey Wilberforce, Ian Kanyeki and Lucas Brown.

Parish Register

Welcome new members



Sharon Bentley



Emily Bollom



Alex Curtis



Trey Curtis



Johanna Feamster



Michael Feamster



Amy Fiegener



Rob Fiegener



Becky Hoppe



Brian Hoppe



Helen J. (Mishler) Lewis



Scott Carney Lewis



Dan McDonald



Breana McIntosh



Jacob McIntosh



Landen Peeler



Jennifer Porter



Matt Porter

The sacrament of baptism

Hudson Robert Williams, son of **Clare** and **Jonathan Williams**, was baptized on May 8.
Isla Elizabeth Smith, daughter of **Sarah** and **Alex Smith**, was baptized on May 8.
Kyne Wilberforce, son of **Purity** and **Kip Makkitoor**, was baptized on May 1.
Josiah Christopher-Michael Price, son of **Betty** and **Chuck Price**, was baptized on May 1.
Jude Phillip Butts, son of **Olivia** and **Phillip Butts**, was baptized on June 19.

The celebration of Christian marriage

Kate Rowland married **Jason Brooks** on May 7
Melissa Davis married **Evan Lockett** on May 14
Helen Santee married **Scott Lewis** on May 23

With gratitude for the resurrection

CT Thompson, a member since 2005, died on June 17
Barbara LaBenske, a member since 1986, died on June 28
Ann Taylor, a member since 2006, died on July 3
Jacqueline Poe, a member since 1991, died on July 4
Curt Holdridge, a member since 1997, died on July 4
Kathleen Reynolds, a member since 2019, died on July 5
Laurence Mansur, a member since 1988, died on July 6



Chris Tham



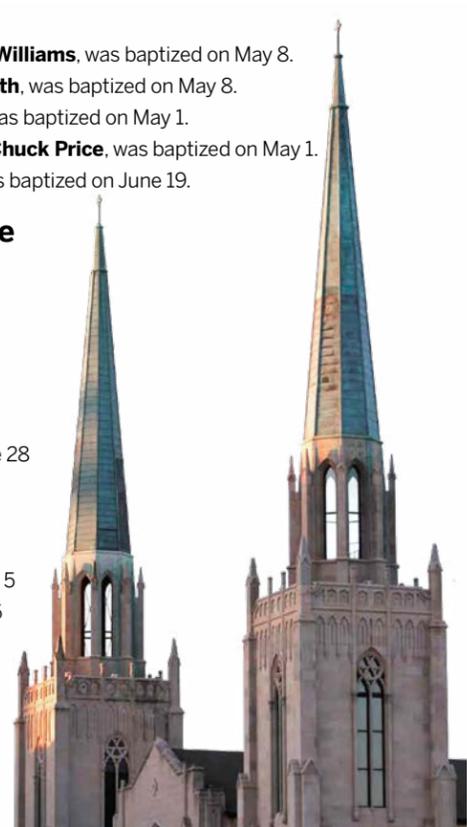
Janice Tham



Laura Tham



Caleb Tham



Tidings magazine:
 The Holy Spirit at work
 in and through the
 members of the First
 Presbyterian Church

Tidings is a quarterly publication of First Presbyterian Church of Tulsa, 709 South Boston Avenue, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74119.

Read past issues of Tidings on our website at FirstChurchTulsa.org/Tidings. If you would like to write an article or take photos for the magazine, please contact Louann Buhlinger at lbuhlinger@FirstChurchTulsa.org or call 918-301-1032.

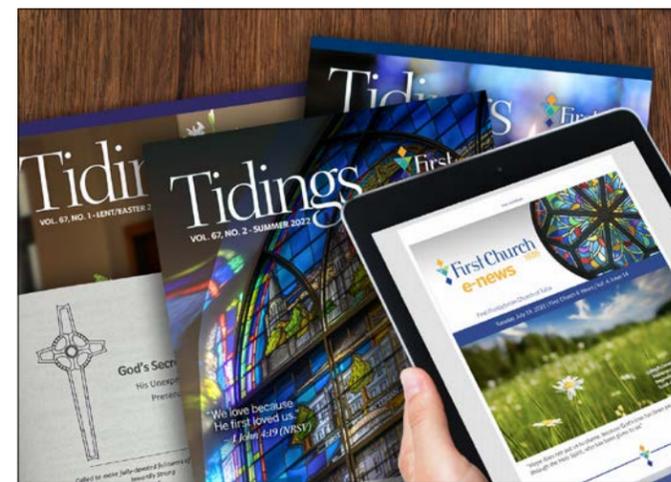
Editorial Team: Louann Buhlinger, Patricia Hall, Katrina Marie Meacham and Kathy Wilson.

Contributors: Rev. Dan Hutchinson, Duff Points, Joan Hoar, Julia Metcalf, Kathy Wilson, Katrina Marie Meacham, Kim Jones, Laura Voth, Louann Buhlinger, Phillip Bowman, Ron Pearson, Sarah Savage and Rev. Wambugu Gachungi.

Thank you to the members of the Communications Committee for reviewing and selecting editorial for inclusion.

Designer: Paul Marsh

Editor: Louann Buhlinger



First Church Tulsa publications

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FirstChurchTulsa.org/Read

Ready for the next steps
 to membership?

Inquirers' Class

Join us for our next Inquirers' Class. For more information, contact **Patricia Hall**, director of new member outreach at 918-301-1028 or email phall@firstchurchtulsa.org.



Pastoral Care

Please notify us of hospitalizations, births and deaths by contacting **Kathy Wilson** at 918-301-1029. There are two numbers to call for prayer at any hour including the main church number, 918-584-4701, and a pastor on call will be notified; or Paula and Mark Peterson with the **Guild of Intercessors** at 918-296-5548, mandppeterson@msn.com.

Find it on the First Church Tulsa website

Find the latest information and stories on the First Church website.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
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Worship with us.

8:00 a.m. Chapel, Traditional Worship

8:30 a.m. Stephenson Hall, Contemporary Worship

11:00 a.m. Sanctuary, Traditional Worship

11:00 a.m. Stephenson Hall, Contemporary Worship

11:00 a.m. Great Hall, Tulsa International Fellowship (TIF) Worship

Watch worship online at [FirstChurchTulsa.org/YouTube](https://www.FirstChurchTulsa.org/YouTube)

Read E-News or the website calendar at [FirstChurchTulsa.org/Events](https://www.FirstChurchTulsa.org/Events) for worship changes or additions.

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Cover photos by First Church member Kelly Brown.