

# Tidings

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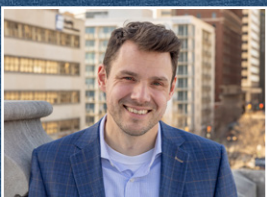
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2025 ≡

# Celebrating 140 YEARS

**“And whatever you do, whether in word or deed,  
do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving  
thanks to God the Father through Him.”**

– Colossians 3:17



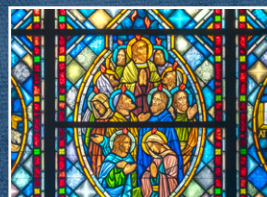
**140 years later,  
It's still all  
about Jesus**

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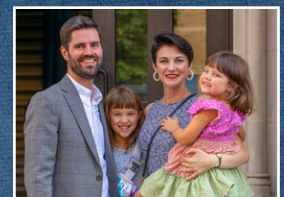
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# Tidings

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## So, what's it all about?

IT'S STILL ALL ABOUT JESUS

*By Rev. Dan Hutchinson, Interim pastor*

"So, what's it about?" We're all familiar with this question. We share about a new movie we have watched, a book we have read, or a podcast we have listened to, and the question inevitably comes: what's it all about? What is the focus, the point?

Of course, the same question can be asked of the church, of the Christian faith: what is it all about? The simple answer, of course, is that it is about Jesus.

Paul puts it this way in 1 Corinthians 1: "For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." We preach Christ crucified!

Friends, the reality is that the good news has not changed, and the message and purpose of the church has not changed in the last 2000 years. It is still all about Jesus!

I love this church. I love our history, our heritage, the ministries that have been born from this community, and the lives that have been transformed. Through the long, storied, 140-year history of our church, what I most appreciate is that this congregation has never wavered on what is most important. They never forgot that fundamental truth: it is still all about Jesus.

And of course, we have not forgotten it either! Yet I find myself wondering if we need to pause and remind ourselves. We walk through this life, and it is easy to become discouraged or downcast; it is easy to lose our focus. It is easy

to get side-tracked by a thousand things that vie for our attention and space in our hearts. As a church, we can find ourselves focused on this transition phase, or strategic initiatives, or programming, or giving, or mission projects– or a hundred other things. This is all important work. But it is not the point.

At the end of the day, the church is not about a pastor, or a worship service in a particular style, or the programs, or even its mission and service projects. It is still, first and foremost, all about Jesus. All we do here is about Jesus. It is for His glory, to make His name known, to invite others to know and to love and to serve Jesus, to receive the life that He offers.

As we look back to celebrate 140 years and look ahead with expectation to the next 140, my prayer is that our lives and actions, our worship and our service, our engagement in this church body and beyond might be shaped by this singular, defining truth: it is still all about Jesus.

Rev. Dan Hutchinson





# Find healing after grief, together

## THE GRIEF SHARE PROGRAM AT FIRST CHURCH

By Josie Whitley

The loss of a loved one is one of the most difficult things we're likely to experience in our lifetime. While support is often readily available immediately after the loss; the days, weeks, months, and, sometimes, years that follow are full of challenges, adjustments, and changes that we may not have anticipated. Additionally, our support system may not understand or have the insight necessary to help or we may not want to burden our support system members with our ongoing struggles. Out of this need for help and support following the passing of a loved one GriefShare was created.

**GriefShare** is a structured, 13-week, Christ-centered program that includes readings, videos, a workbook, and weekly meetings where members may share their thoughts and experiences regarding the topic of the week. GriefShare has been offered since 1998 and is now the most widely used grief support resource for churches. At this time over one million individuals have participated in a GriefShare program. It is offered only through local churches and participants pay only for the cost of the workbook.

One of our members, **Rick Priest**, brought GriefShare to the attention of First Church staff. He had participated in three offerings of GriefShare and found it very helpful after the passing of his wife, Rosemary.

"It happens in an instant. Your life changes forever. There are no do-overs. You can't go back.

With my wife, Rosemary, it was unexpected. She had been in poor health for a while, but this was not anticipated. The emotions were overwhelming. Thank God he puts us in a fog, because we could not bear the full impact all at once.

I attended my first GriefShare session three weeks after Rosemary passed. What I remember most from that first cycle is being among people who were hurting like I was, and that alone brought comfort. The sessions helped me realize I'm not alone and that the flood of emotions I felt was normal. I bonded with others in my group, and together we were able to share and support one another.

Because I was still in such a mental fog, I enrolled for a second cycle, and then a third. Grief cannot be fixed. But GriefShare provides tools to cope and come to terms with it.

Each journey is unique, yet we face common obstacles. GriefShare brings all of that together and presents it in a God-centered way.

The program had such an impact on me that I felt led to see if First Church would host it. Thankfully, they embraced the idea—and I hope this is just the beginning of a long and rewarding partnership."

- Rick Priest



Rick Priest and Kathy Wilson

**Rick Priest** and **Kathy Wilson**, Ministry Assistant for Pastoral Care, and a widow who lost her husband in 2017, co-led the first offering of the GriefShare program at First Church in the spring of 2025. Members are invited to share in the meetings as they feel comfortable. Over the 13 weeks, members discover commonalities and ways to cope with challenges in a safe and supportive setting.

### Members of the initial First Church group offered these comments about the program:

"Grief has a way of isolating us as we manage through the process of saying goodbye to loved ones and rebuilding our lives without them. Losing my beloved husband, Jeff, was an earthquake - there was nothing in my life that wasn't upended, both now and in the future.

When GriefShare was offered at First Church four years after his death, I decided it was time to see where I was stuck and where I needed healing.

Everything about GriefShare - the videos, the materials, and the scriptural basis - is developed with tremendous care. The group sharing was tender and compassionate, and very helpful and healing.

As I embarked on the last session, I recognized that I had gained a much broader view of all the ways grief shows up, how different it is for every relationship, how to navigate difficulties I've experienced, and how to balance these with hope and joy."

- Cynthia Stewart

"My journey through the GriefShare classes brought me much comfort and resilience in dealing with the loss of my husband. Through the weekly studies, scriptures, and class discussions, I formed new and valued relationships. Plus, the instructors were encouraging and very supportive."

- Adrienne Elder

"While no program can speak to every nuance of coping with a loss, GriefShare includes examples of many ways people have found strategies for managing their emotions in more healthy ways. One of the strengths of the program is that it helps dispel the illusion that we are alone in our struggles. The group discussions were so helpful in addressing more specific challenges that the curricular materials did not include."

- Josie Whitley

"After Dorothy died, my life had become a struggle. It was different and yet, much was the same. What I hoped to gain from GriefShare, was clarity. I wanted to know better how the loss of Dorothy was impacting my life, my behavior, and my mindset.

Over the 13 weeks that our group met I learned about myself. I came to understand what had changed in my life. I learned how behavior traits which I'd always expressed were modified and how some of my behaviors were almost new. In other words, I gained some of the clarity I'd hoped for. I also gained new friends. I found real support and understanding. I found acceptance and I found people who could actually advise me in a meaningful way. I found ways to approach some of the lethargy impacting my life. I think any grieving person could gain these insights and I hope so. The sessions can be difficult but the bonds, the caring, the respect I found in my GriefShare group was immense. It brought me great peace."

- David Ford



Kathy Wilson, Ministry Assistant to Pastoral Care, facilitating a GriefShare meeting.

## Do you need help dealing with grief?

- GriefShare is a global program offered through local churches. At First Church Tulsa, it includes videos, scripture readings, and small group discussions.
- More than one million people have participated in GriefShare since it began in 1998.
- Participants can share as they feel ready, there's no pressure to speak, only space to heal.
- GriefShare is open to anyone who has experienced the death of a loved one—whether recently or years ago.

The second cycle of GriefShare classes started on September 10, but you may register at any time during the 13-week program. To register, go to **www.GriefShare.org** and click "Find a Group." Or, contact Kathy Wilson at **KWilson@firstchurchtulsa.org** or (918) 301-1029, or reach out to Rick Priest at (918) 906-0349.







# Weeding, worship, and country roads

TAKEAWAYS FROM THE EXODUS SUMMER MISSION TRIP

By Josiah Price, First Church Exodus youth

As an I'd-like-to-think wise person once said, a mission trip is like a burger—it's sandwiched between two long bus rides. Our driver during these voyages was **Mr. Steve Wilson**, director of high school ministries at First Presbyterian Church of Tulsa. Since there's only so much entertainment you can get from paved roads, endless countryside, and the occasional herd of goats or cows, the long hours on the bus need to be filled in other ways. Riders spend the time conversing, playing verbal games, reading, or napping. They also pass around the song request list. Many songs have loyal followings. Some are guaranteed to be heard at least once.

Eventually, all great bus rides must come to an end. This trip had a relatively short travel time, so it wasn't long before we were trundling into the parking lot of our host church. The outside was welcoming, with a large lot surrounded by grassy fields and a porte cochère to shade us as we unloaded our gear. Inside, you could take a right to reach the kitchen and gym or a left to find the game room and youth room where our

gatherings would take place. Sunday night, we joined a lively game night in the gym.

The work we did was nothing if not varied—sorting clothes, weeding, cooking (in the literal sense, not how the kids mean it), organizing supplies, preparing soap containers, cleaning, mopping, and picking up trash. On Wednesday, we moved boxes of food into storage, refrigerators, and the freezer. There,

As always, we abided by the 'work hard, play hard' principle.

we learned how to make brigades and to lift with our ~backs~tongues ~knees~. Also, did you know freezers are, in fact, cold? The warm embrace of the outside air was deeply appreciated. Everyone was eager to help—perhaps best demonstrated when someone asked for help

moving a table. Five of us sprang into action, only to discover it was a plastic kids' table that weighed about two pounds. Easily the hardest job of the trip. Friday morning, we cleaned up the church grounds. My final task: placing a mat beneath a small plastic play structure.

As always, we abided by the principle of "work hard, play hard." Their game room had pool, table tennis, air hockey—and a fascinating amount of Dr. Pepper merchandise.



We brought games like Banana Grams, Poetry for Neanderthals, and hosted late-night rounds of Hide and Seek. Mr. Steve introduced "Two Rooms and a Boom," an investigative role-based activity with secret teams and hostage swaps.

Thursday evening, we cleaned a play area for young children... which somehow turned into roleplaying with action figures and grocery counters. (I was mopping nearby, watching with a broad smile—hidden behind a Kylo Ren mask I donned for comedic purposes.) On Friday afternoon, we went to the beach with someone we had served alongside earlier in the week. Most of our time was spent in the water, forming factions and launching mud at the opposition. And yes, there were sandcastles. That night was a mission trip first (as far as I know): karaoke. I ended up as emcee, and one of our leaders, Mr. BJ—christened DJ BJ—was our DJ. There were duets, group songs, and lots of stepping outside comfort zones. We closed with a full-bus, arm-linked rendition of "Country Roads."

Each day included devotions, walking through the Gospel of John leading to Jesus's crucifixion. We alternated between morning and evening sessions and discussed our thoughts before each one. All were meaningful, but Tuesday night stands out.

Mr. Steve led us through an imaginative prayer based on scenes from John's account. When it ended, almost no one moved. The silence lingered. It struck us all deeply in a way I've never experienced on a mission trip.

Friday night's lesson focused on preparing our ebenezers—short nylon strings melted into wristbands. This trip's wristbands were bright green with reflective silver, like a construction vest.

We each spent time in prayer, then gathered in a circle to affirm one another and share what the trip meant to us. Afterward, we spent time chatting and giving more affirmations.

Saturday morning, we packed up, said goodbye to our host church, and set out. After a stop at McDonald's for breakfast, we began the (relatively) short ride home. Some chatting, some singing, some napping later, the skyline of Tulsa came into view. The final song? "Country Roads," of course—arms linked across the aisles as we pulled into the Powerhouse lot.

If there's one word that represents this trip, it's connectivity. It was a smaller group—just 27 of us—so the bonds formed quickly. By the end, I think I saw all 351 possible combinations of people connecting in some way.

(Oh, did I mention that we did a lot of weeding?)

After Mr. Steve's imaginative prayer from John's Gospel, no one moved. The silence lingered—it was unlike anything I've felt on a mission trip.



"There's something powerful that happens when a group is just the right size—students connect more deeply, let their guard down, and start building real friendships that last far beyond the trip."

—Steve Wilson,  
Director of High School  
Ministries



# From sponsored child to community leader

PETRA KIDS IS CHANGING LIVES AND COMMUNITIES

By Petra Kids Ministries



In the heart of one of Uganda's most remote and economically challenged regions, a truly inspiring story unfolds. It's the story of **Oscar**, a young boy whose future seemed uncertain after his father left the family when Oscar was just four years old. With his mother doing her best to care for him and his siblings, the dream of education seemed almost impossible. But then, something extraordinary happened—Oscar's life took a turn for the better, thanks to the **Petra Kids Student Sponsorship Program**.

## A life-changing connection

You might wonder, what could possibly bridge the gap between a life of hardship, and one filled with opportunity? Enter **Tim and Krista Schaafsma**, a kind-hearted couple who chose to sponsor Oscar through Petra Kids Ministries. Their support didn't just change Oscar's life; it created a lasting bond that continues to this day.

Oscar began his educational journey at Petra Christian School, where he was more than just a student; he was a young boy full of potential, nurtured by the unwavering support of his sponsors. The sponsorship program covered his educational costs, providing him with essentials like accommodation in the boys' dormitory, meals, and school supplies. This meant Oscar could focus on his studies without worrying about the possibility of not being able to graduate.

Starting at the Early Childhood Center, Oscar learned foundational academic skills and explored spiritual teachings, including Bible stories and the teachings of Jesus. As he moved through primary and secondary school, Oscar excelled academically and took pride in his achievements. He also grew spiritually, memorizing scriptures and writing letters to the Schaafsmas, who played a crucial role in his journey.

"Oscar returned to Petra Christian School, not as a student, but as an instructor, eager to inspire and educate the next generation."

## A future takes shape

When Oscar finished high school, he faced a big decision about his future. With the Schaafsmas' continued encouragement, he pursued higher education, earning a degree in Computer Sciences, that equipped him to give back to his community. Oscar returned to Petra Christian School, not as a student, but as an instructor, eager to inspire and educate the next generation of students who, like him, began their journeys with Petra Kids Ministries (PKM).

Today, Oscar is our Training and Development Director at PKM. He oversees the computer coding training programs in our schools and manages the Tech Hubs in Lira City. Under his leadership, students are gaining invaluable skills in technology—a field that was

almost unheard of for them just five years ago. They're also learning sustainable agricultural practices, like vegetable farming and goat breeding, which help them become self-sufficient and contribute to their communities.

## The power of education and support

Oscar's journey is a testament to the transformative power of education and community support. The Petra Kids Student

Sponsorship Program doesn't just change individual lives; it strengthens entire communities. By empowering students like Oscar to pursue education and reach their potential, the program helps create a generation of educated, skilled, and motivated individuals ready to drive positive change.

Through the Petra Kids Student Sponsorship Program, sponsors like Tim and Krista Schaafsma become partners in a child's journey, witnessing firsthand the incredible impact of education and their support. This program is a beacon of hope, showing how we can break the cycle of poverty and create a brighter future for all. Oscar's story is a powerful reminder of the profound impact of education and the enduring legacy of PKM's mission. **To find more information about PKM, please visit the website at [www.PetraKids.org](http://www.PetraKids.org)**



"Our Vision is to provide a Christian environment where our students are empowered to become self-sufficient through employment and entrepreneurship."

—Petra Kids Ministries



First Presbyterian Church of Tulsa Foundation



## Celebrate God's blessings through giving

By Katie Williams, Foundation Director

Think of the countless blessings God has given us: family, faith, and the assurance that He walks with us in both joy and sorrow. Blessings, whether big or small, are entrusted to us with the responsibility of sharing them. When we feed, clothe, or offer hospitality to others, we bless them and in doing so, we bless Him.

We share God's gifts through our time, our talents, and our financial resources. Whether we have a little or a lot, we are called to invest in ways that magnify God and His Kingdom. Stewarding our assets for future generations shows that, just as God has cared for our needs, we have considered theirs.

For decades, the First Presbyterian Foundation has carried this vision forward. Those who came before us gave so that the children of God today might be cared for. Supporting the Foundation through gifts like the Birthday Club or contributions beyond our needs continues this legacy of faith.

The founders and supporters of the Foundation gave out of personal devotion to Christ, to First Church, and to their community. Blessing by blessing, the Foundation has grown to support the next generation. Now it is our turn.

**How will you share your blessings with your time, your talents, or your financial gifts for the generations to come?**

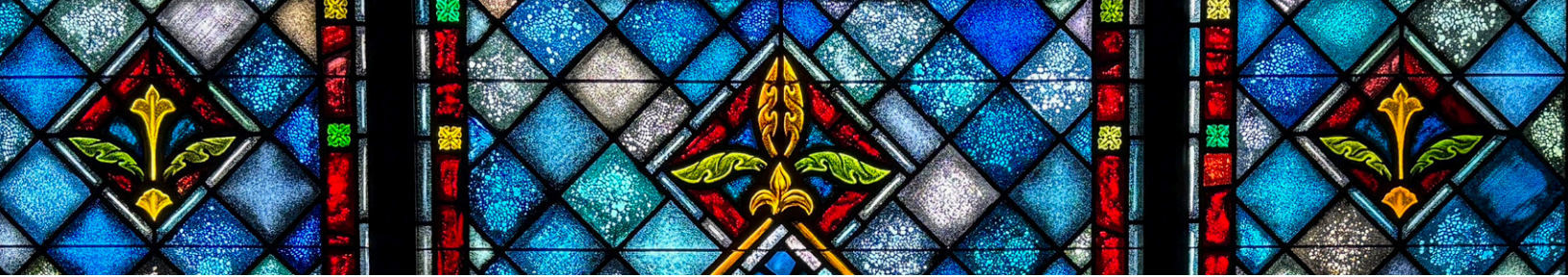
"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me... that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit."

— John 15:1-2

**First Church**  
Foundation 1885

To learn more about how to share your blessings with the First Presbyterian Foundation call **Katie Williams** at 918-292-9063.





# The stained glass instructs:

SHOWING US HOW TO BE A DISCIPLE

By Nick McMillan, Communion Committee Co-Chair

Jesus gives us the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

Stained glass windows are one of the ways disciples of Christ seek to fulfill this Great Commission. Part of a long tradition, stained glass windows are richly displayed in First Presbyterian Church’s

Sanctuary, Kerr Chapel, transoms, stairwells, and vestibules.

Strategically placed in frequented areas, these works of art glorify God in their display while also teaching us how to glorify God ourselves.

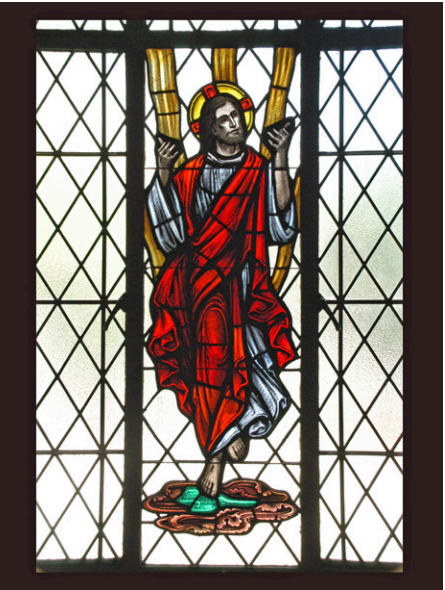
Like the church’s other teaching methods, such as the verbal in sermons, experiential in service, musical in song, and textual in scripture, the visual method of stained glass windows at First Church instructs in multiple topics related to Christian life. The windows specifically instruct us in our role as disciples in the time between the Ascension and Christ’s Second Coming. While symbolic, their art is not meant to be only a mystery to unlock or decode, it is meant to be a tool. It is meant to answer questions and teach us about how we are to live, to answer the question, reiterated by Francis Schaeffer in the last century, “How should we then Live?”

First, we are to know God, and instruction in knowing God is given in the windows in the vestibule transom at top of the north stairway facing Boston Avenue and leading to Kerr Chapel. In this series of images, designed and installed by the Willet Hauser Architectural Glass Company, we see the crucified Christ and the story of his life. Inside Kerr Chapel in the north wall, a window depicts Christ’s Ascension.

These windows remind us to: “Enter to worship, depart to serve.”

In the liminal time following Christ’s Ascension until the time of the New Heaven and Earth, Christians have responsibilities to tend to the corporal and spiritual needs of others.

These responsibilities are demonstrated in a series of windows, situated in the vestibule transom over the exit to Boston Avenue from the Kerr Memorial building, visually paraphrasing Matthew 25:35-40. There, at the lower level where doors lead out to the city, windows display the reminder, concisely put in the words of the



**Kerr Chapel – North Wall** | Inside Kerr Chapel, a stained glass window portrays Christ’s Ascension, reminding us of the promise of His return.

bulletin for the dedication service one hundred years ago, that we “enter to worship, depart to serve.” Beginning and ending with God, the first in this series of images is alpha and the last omega. Between these are depictions of bread, a water jug, open doors, a coat, a medicine bottle, and a prison cell symbolizing our responsibilities as Christians to provide food, water, hospitality, clothing, medication, and visitation. The placement of these images at the exit to Boston Avenue reminds us that our mission field is not only in distant locales, it is also right here in our own city. Whether near or far, this window series teaches us how to respond to the call to serve.

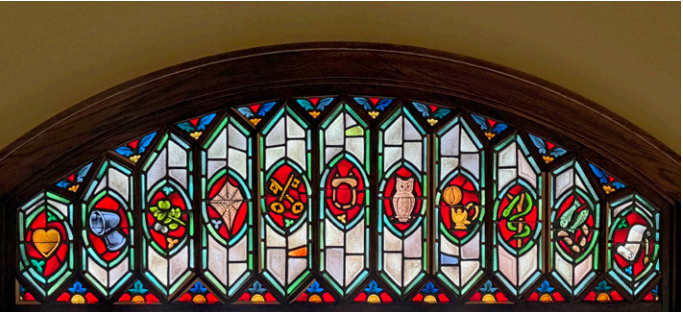
In addition to demonstrating our responsibilities for corporal needs, First Church’s stained glass windows instruct us in our spiritual mission. The two windows placed in the northeast corner of the sanctuary represent scriptures reiterating the call to go forth into the world to share the Gospel. Moreover, these windows demonstrate that we do not do this alone. One shows that the Holy Spirit is with us, depicting the first Pentecost, with tongues of flame descended upon the disciples. The other reminds us that, to fulfill the great commission, we have been equipped with the Bible, the “sword of the Spirit.”

Stained glass windows glorify God in their display while also teaching us how to glorify God ourselves.

After entering the sanctuary to worship, departing through the southwest exit to Boston Avenue, and looking up, the transom offers a visual reflection on the fruit of the Spirit. In each window above the doors of the south stairwell, the fruit of the Spirit is represented by a series of images. Love is represented by a heart, joy by bells, peace by an olive branch, and patience by a spider’s web. These depictions of the fruit of the spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23 are conjoined with depictions of fruits identified in Corinthians 12:7-10. The next windows in the series show goodness, gentleness, wisdom, knowledge, healing, working miracles, and prophecy and interpretation represented by the keys to the kingdom, a yoke, an owl, a lamp, a serpent on a staff, five loaves and two fish, and a scroll respectively. These windows remind us what we bear when filled with the Holy Spirit.



**Boston Avenue Exit – Kerr Memorial Building** | This series illustrates Matthew 25:35-40 with symbols of food, water, hospitality, clothing, healing, and visitation. The placement at the Boston Avenue exit underscores the call to serve both locally and globally.



**Sanctuary – South Stairwell Transom** | Above the southwest doors, images of hearts, bells, olive branches, and other symbols represent the fruit and gifts of the Spirit, reminding us what we bear when filled with God’s presence.

The instruction we receive from these windows is to “Go!” Go in this new reality following Christ’s crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension and make disciples. In the US today, missionaries are now predominantly the laity, and the best way to make disciples is to be a disciple. To train in this discipline, First Church provides opportunities to engage both corporally and spiritually with our commission, from donating food, to serving in a deacon ministry, volunteering with Helping Hand Ministry, and attending a church retreat. The stained glass windows provide a rich visual tutorial from which we may additionally learn and relearn how to follow Christ.



**Vestibule Transom – North Stairway** | Depicting the crucified Christ and scenes from His life, these Willet Hauser windows above the north stairway to Kerr Chapel invite worshipers to know God more deeply.



**Sanctuary – Northeast Corner** | Two windows here highlight our spiritual mission: one depicts Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit, while the other emphasizes Scripture as the “sword of the Spirit.”







From left: David, Olivia, Rachael and Penelope Vaughan.

# Be part of the village

RACHAEL VAUGHAN ON BUILDING COMMUNITY BY SERVING

*As told to First Church Communications*

When Rachael Vaughan and her family joined First Church in 2023, she was already carrying a full schedule. Between homeschooling her daughter, managing a busy household, and caring for kids ages 7, 4, and 20, her free time was scarce and valuable. But when she and her husband, David, stepped into Children’s Ministry, they quickly discovered the unexpected blessings of serving.

**What went through your mind when you first got the email asking for nursery volunteers?**

RACHAEL: I laughed, honestly. When someone says, “Here’s an hour to yourself,” my first thought was not to go spend that hour watching someone else’s kids. I was like, “Really? This is how I’m going to recharge?”

**So what changed your mind? Why did you say yes anyway?**

RACHAEL: It was actually something I heard in my K group. A friend shared this study that said kids thrive when they have five trusted adults in their lives outside of their parents. That hit me hard. I thought, I can be one of those five adults for someone else’s child,

and someone else can be that for mine. That’s when it clicked. Serving wasn’t just babysitting. It was investing in a village.

**You talk about “the village.” What do you mean by that?**

RACHAEL: In order to have a village, you have to be part of that village. You can’t just wish for it — you have to contribute to it. We live in a world where people are isolated, and those circles of support don’t happen naturally as much anymore. So if I want my kids to grow up surrounded by caring adults who know them and love them, I have to show up for other people’s kids, too.



**What surprised you once you actually started serving?**

RACHAEL: It surprised me how fast I felt connected. I mean, you don’t get that same depth just by showing up on Sundays and slipping out the back. But when you’re side by side in the nursery or serving with other parents, you bond quickly. You share stories, you laugh through the chaos, you even pray for each other. It’s one of the fastest ways to feel like you belong.

**Did serving affect your friendships, too?**

RACHAEL: Definitely. It deepened them. I got to know my friends’ kids by name, by personality, by quirks. And when you know someone’s kids like that, your friendship with them gets stronger, more real. It’s not just “How are you?” in passing anymore. It’s, “How’s Jack doing in school?” or, “I noticed Sarah’s really into art now.” Serving with kids connects whole families together.

**How do your kids see all this? Do they notice the difference?**

RACHAEL: Absolutely. Church isn’t just a building to them now. It’s filled with familiar faces — people they trust, who greet them by name. They feel like they belong here. That’s huge.

**You said in the interview that you’re big on intentional living. How does serving fit into that?**

RACHAEL: There’s a lot of talk about cutting out what doesn’t serve you — and that’s good. But I’ve also learned to intentionally serve the things that do serve me: my family, my church, my community. First Church has poured so much into us. Honestly, giving back one Sunday every four to six weeks? That feels like the least I can do.

**What would you tell someone who’s still hesitant about serving?**

RACHAEL: I’d say, Try it for a year. That’s maybe ten Sundays. If it’s not for you, fine. But you’ll probably find it gives back way more than you expect. And just be available. Say yes. People notice that, and it opens doors to more opportunities to serve and even lead.

**Last one: what’s your bottom line? Why keep doing this?**

RACHAEL: I want my kids to have a village. And that means showing up to be that for others. Serving isn’t just for the church’s sake — it’s for mine, for my kids, for my friendships. It’s worth every minute.



# Parish Register

## New members August 2025 class



Alan Bain



Piper Bain



Emily Collins



Taylor Collins



Amber Gent



Stephen Gent



Lydia Gray



Cornelius Kiprotich



Gad Muchai



Andrea Morgan



Tobias Muriithi



Beverly Schafer



Rick Schafer



Lizzi Wright



Sam Wright



Thomas York

We welcome visitors to First Church Tulsa and offer special events and classes designed specifically for newcomers and those wanting to become members.

**Newcomer Gatherings:** Newcomers, whether new or longtime worshipers, are invited to join us for coffee, light breakfast, and fellowship as we get to know each other and learn about First Church. Gatherings are held quarterly.

**Membership Classes:** Interested in becoming a covenant member? Our membership classes, led by facilitators and pastors, help you learn about the church, how you can become involved, and provide resources and support to help you grow in your faith at First Church. No need to attend a Newcomer Gathering first. Classes are held quarterly.

Details for both newcomer gatherings and new membership classes can be found at [FirstChurchTulsa.org/newcomers](https://FirstChurchTulsa.org/newcomers).

### The sacrament of baptism

**Emmanuel E. Persson**, daughter of **Emily and Isaiah Persson**, was baptized on May 25

**Asher A. Persson**, son of **Emily and Isaiah Persson**, was baptized on May 25.

**Felicity Anne Trotzuk**, daughter of **Jane and Dylan Trotzuk**, was baptized on June 15.

**Jonathan Henry Holstein**, son of **Whitney and Jonathan Holstein**, was baptized on June 15.

**Charlotte Troi Hoefer**, daughter of **Brian and Erin Hoefer**, was baptized on June 29.

**Natalie Lynn Hoefer**, daughter of **Brian and Erin Hoefer**, was baptized on June 29.

**Lauren Rae Hoefer**, daughter of **Brian and Erin Hoefer**, was baptized on June 29.

**Kayson James Crowe**, son of **Paige and J.J. Crowe**, was baptized on July 8.

**Annie Eloise Myatt**, daughter of **Emma and Dalton Myatt**, was baptized on July 27.

**Judah DeSpain**, son of **Athena and Paul DeSpain**, was baptized August 17.

**Zora Ozioma Werna Ekwempu**, daughter of **Phyllis and Somto Ekwempu**, was baptized August 31.

**Ismael Ahadi Lopez**, son of **Cate and Edgar Lopez**, was baptized August 31.

**AnneMarie Claire Holk**, daughter of **Jennifer and Clay Holk**, was baptized September 7.

**Kennedy Lane Powers**, daughter of **Carly and Barrett Powers**, was baptized September 7.

### The celebration of Christian marriage:

**Cynthia Coleman and Idowu Falodun** were married on July 23.

**Courtney Gill and Andrew Baumann** were married on August 30.



### The joy of new life! We welcome:

**Slater M. Gent**, son of **Amber and Stephen Gent**, was born on June 3.

### With gratitude for the resurrection:

**Dwight Creveling**, a member since 1996, died on June 4.

**Nelson Johnson**, a member since 2005, died on May 19.

**Sarah Minden**, a member since 1982, died on May 29.

**Don Pray**, a member since 1963, died on May 26.

**Anne Rupe**, a member since 2014, died on September 8.

**Barbara Wiedenmann**, a member since 1961, died September 11.

## Connect with First Church Tulsa

### Subscribe to E-news

Stay in the loop with worship updates, upcoming events, and ways to serve and connect—delivered to your inbox every other week. Sign up at [FirstChurchTulsa.org/Enews-Signup](https://FirstChurchTulsa.org/Enews-Signup).



### Watch Sunday worship on COX Cable Channel 3 and social media

If you're unable to attend in person, you can still join us for the 11 a.m. Sanctuary service, broadcast live on COX Cable Channel 3 and rebroadcast at 5 p.m. and 10 p.m.



You can also watch the service live or anytime afterward on our YouTube channel at [YouTube.com/@FirstChurchTulsa](https://YouTube.com/@FirstChurchTulsa) or on Facebook at [Facebook.com/FirstChurchTulsa](https://Facebook.com/FirstChurchTulsa). Tulsa International Fellowship worship is livestreamed on Facebook [@TulsaInternationalFellowship](https://Facebook.com/TulsaInternationalFellowship) and on YouTube [@TIFChurchFPC2571](https://YouTube.com/TIFChurchFPC2571).

### Stay connected with Realm

Realm is a secure online platform and app for First Church members to manage their profiles, view giving history, connect with groups, send messages, and access an up-to-date church directory. Log in first at [onrealm.org](https://onrealm.org) and then download the Realm Connect App, available in app stores. To get started, contact Kathy Wilson at 918-301-1029 for an invitation.



### Subscribe to our YouTube channel

Explore over 500 videos on our YouTube channel—including past worship services, podcasts, special events, and more. Whether you're tuning in live or catching up later, there's always something meaningful to watch and share. Make the most of our content—subscribe at [YouTube.com/@FirstChurchTulsa](https://YouTube.com/@FirstChurchTulsa).



### Facebook and Instagram

Follow us on Facebook [@FirstChurchTulsa](https://Facebook.com/FirstChurchTulsa)

Follow us on Instagram [@FirstChurchTulsa](https://Instagram.com/FirstChurchTulsa)



## Tidings First Church 1885

**Tidings: 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](https://FirstChurchTulsa.org/Tidings). Please direct questions or comments to [communications@FirstChurchTulsa.org](mailto:communications@FirstChurchTulsa.org) or call 918-584-4701.

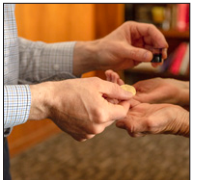
**Editorial Team:** Duff Points, Lynn Fesperman, Kathy Wilson and Paul Marsh.

**Contributors:** Rev. Dan Hutchinson, Nick McMillan, Petra Mangesho, Nelson Murage, Josiah Price, Emma Myatt, Rachael Vaughan, Josie Whitley, Katie Williams, Kathy Wilson, and Steve Wilson.

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

### Pastoral care

For pastoral needs, prayer requests, important family news or a change in contact information, please call 918-584-4701 or email Kathy Wilson at [kwilson@firstchurchtulsa.org](mailto:kwilson@firstchurchtulsa.org). To directly request prayer by the Guild of Intercessors, call Paula Peterson at 918-296-5548 or text 918-688-2163.



### First Church Tulsa online resources

Find all links at: [Linktr.ee/FirstChurchTulsa](https://Linktr.ee/FirstChurchTulsa)





# The Stephenson Hall History Window tells our 140-year story



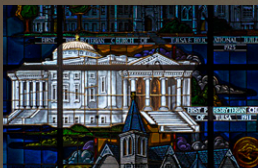
Celtic cross. A reminder of our Scottish history.



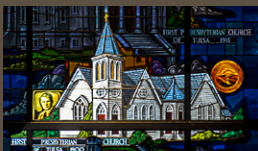
First Presbyterian Church of Tulsa and new worship center 2010. Dedicated 2012.



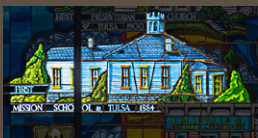
First Presbyterian Church of Tulsa, 1925 and Kerr Educational Building 1955.



First Presbyterian Church of Tulsa 1911. Sheltered victims during the tragic events in May/June, 1921.



First Presbyterian Church of Tulsa 1900. Rev. C. W. Kerr, Great Seal of the Muskogee (Creek) Nation, I.T.



First Mission School Tulsa 1884. Church services held in the building. Park Hill Printing Press.



J.M. Hall & Company General Mercantile site of First Church service 1883. J.M. Hall and Dr. R. M. Loughridge.



Cross – Crosslet Fitchy Heraldic, unshakeable faith.



First Presbyterian Church of Tulsa  
709 S. Boston Ave., Tulsa, OK 74119



Website: [FirstChurchTulsa.org](http://FirstChurchTulsa.org)  
Social media: [FirstChurchTulsa](https://www.facebook.com/FirstChurchTulsa)



See First Church in action!