

Tidings

VOL. 68, NO. 1 - SPRING 2023

 **First 1885
Church**
First Presbyterian Church of Tulsa

Easter
He is Risen!

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When Lent becomes active Jesus said, "follow me!"

By Dr. Jim Miller

Disciples follow. They stay close. If Jesus walks, they walk. They watch what he does and listen to what he says. When the Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness, they want to know why. And when he returns telling them how he fasted and prayed, they want to do the same.

The season of Lent is intended to help us follow Jesus more faithfully.

The question "What are you giving up for Lent?" is intended to align us with Jesus' footsteps. As Jesus gave up his daily routine, heading into the wilderness, so I'll disrupt my own. I'll give up sugar. Coffee. Social media. I'll fast from certain pleasures. I'll deny my wants and walk with him.

This can be helpful, to be sure. But it's passive. I'd like to suggest a few actions that can help get us into step with the Master. The first one is for all of us.

1

Commit

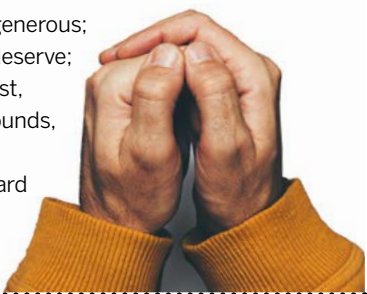
Recommit yourself to faithful Sunday by Sunday worship. There's simply no more important spiritual discipline. "As was his custom, Jesus went to the synagogue on the Sabbath." – Luke 4:16

"Consider adding one or more of these disciplines to your life during Lent."

2

Pray the prayer of Ignatius every morning.

Dearest Lord, teach me to be generous; teach me to serve You as You deserve; to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labor and not to ask for reward save that of knowing I am doing Your Will.



3

Take the first 20 minutes of your Lenten days, thanking the Lord for the blessings that are yours.

4

Journal your way through Lent

by picking a time of the day and spending 15 minutes to write out five blessings, three concerns and a written prayer. Then listen for the Lord to speak.



5

Read one of the gospels (or all of them!) underlining every question Jesus asks. Consider why he asks these questions and how you might respond to them.

6

Seek out videos that will enrich your life, challenge your faith, encourage your walk with Christ and each other. For example, "The Chosen" series, Mel Gibson's "Passion of the Christ," or Corrie Ten Boom's "The Hiding Place."

7

Read through John Stott's "The Cross of Christ."

8

Write a brief note of spiritual encouragement to someone in need.



9

Ask your pastor if you can travel with him/her on a pastoral call.

10

Call Masterwork Academy and ask when you can come by the Bernsen building simply to observe their ministry to elementary school students.

11

Ask if you can join a "lunch buddy" at Anderson School and watch how they serve the child in their care.



12

Call Helping Hand ministry and set an appointment to shadow one of the counselors for an hour on a Monday or Tuesday.

13

Carve out time to attend worship on Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.

14

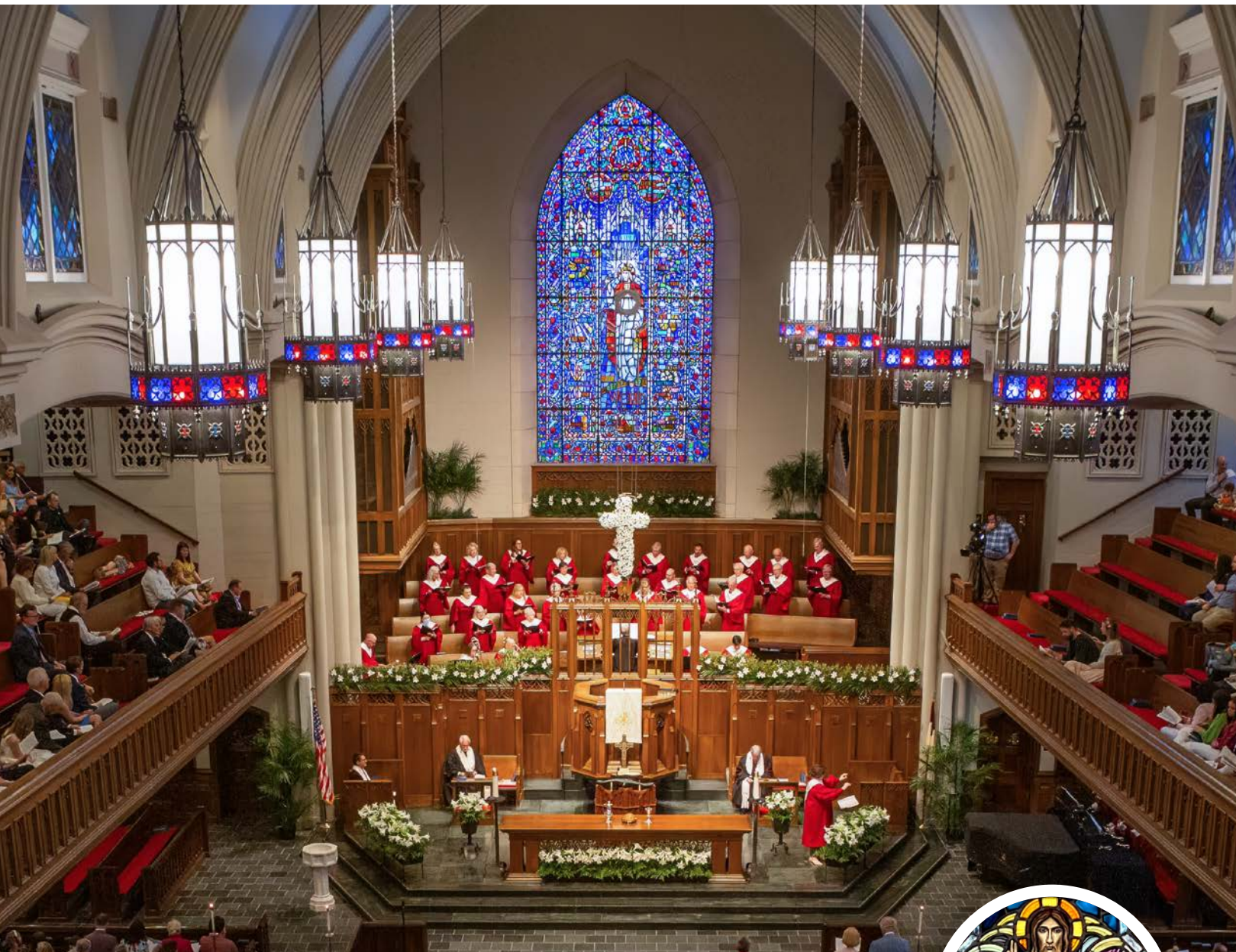
Invite friends (over dinner or coffee) to join you in this exercise. If you had to bet everything you have on whether there is a God or whether there isn't, which side would get your money and why? Or, if you had only one last message to leave to the handful of people who are most important to you, what would it be in 25 words or less?

15

Save money by giving up some luxury you enjoy and give it anonymously to someone in need in Jesus' name.

As we hear on Ash Wednesday night, "From dust you have come, to dust you shall return," stay close to the Master. Let's be intentional about how to do this faithfully. Blessings will follow!





Holy Week explained

By Rev. Dan Hutchinson

Sometimes the words we use at church can sound like a foreign language. If you or someone close to you, a friend, family member or neighbor are not “in the know,” you might find yourself wondering, “What in the world are these people talking about?” Even simple words like sin, grace or holiness can sound like insider talk, not to mention ideas like Trinity, incarnation, predestination, supralapsarianism ... you get my point!

It’s not just church words. We are in the season of Lent, making our way to Holy Week, and the services we promote might be strange to someone who has not grown up with them. One might ask, “What in the world is “Palm Sunday?” I imagine a whole room of people

face-palming, or maybe it’s the one Sunday Presbyterians raise their hand in worship? Why are we celebrating Monday on Thursday? And why do Christians talk about Good Friday when that’s the day celebrating that God died?

If you, or someone you love, has ever had such questions, you’ve come to the right place. Below is a brief synopsis of what happens during the week leading up to the death and resurrection of Jesus which we call Holy Week; and what these signify for followers of this Jesus, who we believe to be the Son of God and the one anointed by God, our Messiah.



Palm Sunday kicks off Holy Week and invites us to relive Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem toward the end of his earthly ministry. Jesus rode a donkey into town, and the crowds laid down palm branches before him, declaring him to be the Son of David – the long awaited and yearned for King. The word associated with Palm Sunday is “Hosanna,” which is a cry for deliverance. The Jewish people had waited for a king to save them and destroy their enemies, and they believed Jesus to be this king. As we worship on Palm Sunday, we declare that Jesus is the king who came to save, though not in the way anyone expected.



This moves us to **Maundy Thursday**, which takes us through Jesus’ final night with his disciples and the celebration of the Passover – the meal that commemorated God’s deliverance of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. The word “Maundy” traces back to the Latin word mandatum, meaning commandment. While at the table, Jesus gave his disciples the command to love one another and showed this love by washing their feet, a task only performed by servants. Through humility, Jesus demonstrated the costly nature of love and pointed ahead to his death on the cross. This service ends in darkness and the congregation is invited to leave in silence in remembrance that on this night Jesus was betrayed, abandoned by those closest to him, and handed over to be killed by evil men.

Stepping into the darkness of these events, we come to **Good Friday**, the service where we recount the death of Jesus and his seven last words from the cross. In this somber service, we remember it was for us that Jesus died. Why do we call it good? We might say that it is good because only through Jesus’ substitutionary death can we receive forgiveness of our sin. In another sense, this day can only be called good in hindsight, because of what comes after, and the realization that death is not the end of the story.



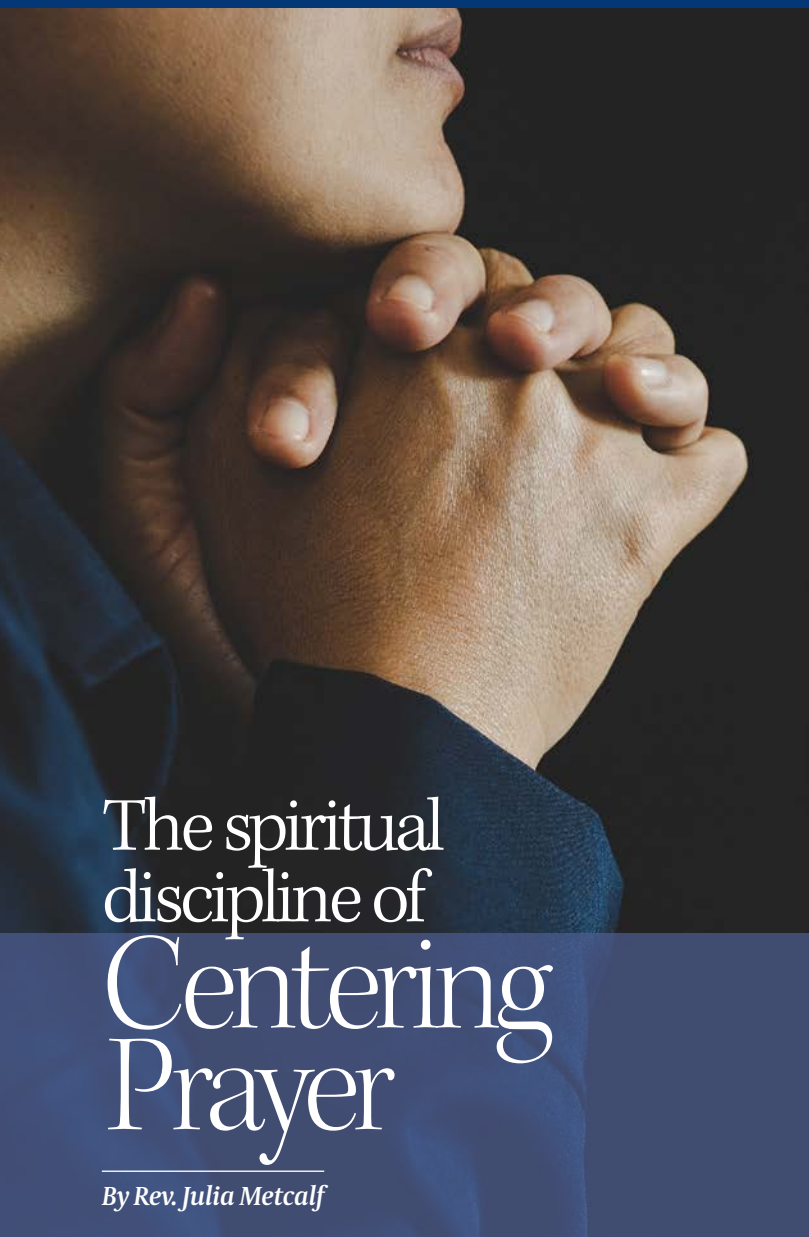
This brings us, finally, to Easter, which is arguably the highpoint of the Christian calendar. **Easter** begins with a sunrise service which starts in the darkness that met us on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. But the joyful proclamation that soon comes is the celebration of Christ’s resurrection from the dead. Jesus is alive! That is the good news of Easter. That word “resurrection” is important. Easter is not about resuscitation as Jesus did not have a near death experience, and he did not come back to life only to die once again. Easter is not about Jesus’ spiritual life as Jesus’ soul did not rise to heaven. No, Easter is about resurrection.

It is about Jesus’ bodily rising to new, incorruptible life that we believe to be a sign of things to come for us through faith in him.

What I love about Holy Week, is that it meets us amid real life. There are days of great joy, days when we see Christ as the King come to rescue us. And there are days when we wonder where Christ is, days when we feel like the grave has won. There are days when we are faithful, days when we feel the Spirit moving in our midst, and there are days when we deny and reject Christ by our words and actions. This is real life on this side of eternity. Yet at the end of the day, our hope, our confidence, our joy is that Christ has been raised. He is alive, victorious, the conqueror of death and sin, and we know that we too have been given the victory through Christ Jesus our Lord!



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.



The spiritual discipline of Centering Prayer

By Rev. Julia Metcalf

As we pass through Lent, we are approached once again with the call to journey into the wilderness. The wilderness or the desert place is a metaphorical space where we can find ourselves in solitude with the Holy Trinity. In this spiritual discipline series, we have explored how solitude and silence allow us to commune with God in an intimate way and remind us of our identity as beloved children of God. **Breath Prayer** and **Lectio Divina** are active practices that we can utilize in our quiet moments with God. Another prayer practice that Christians can carry into their discipline of solitude and silence is called **Centering Prayer**.

Centering Prayer is a method of silent prayer in which we experience God's presence within us, closer than breathing (breath prayer) and closer than thinking (Lectio Divina). Father Thomas Keating, an American monk, who just passed away in 2018, was one of the key teachers and developers of centering prayer. He taught that "Centering Prayer emphasizes prayer as a personal relationship with God and as a movement beyond conversation with Christ to communion with Him." Centering Prayer is not meant to replace other kinds of prayer, but rather, "facilitates the movement from more active modes of prayer — verbal and mental prayer — into a receptive prayer of resting in God."

The steps of Centering Prayer do not look unlike some meditation practices you might come across. However, Centering Prayer is uniquely and purposefully focused on the person of Christ and communion with him. For anyone that struggles sitting still and silently for more than 30 seconds, you are in good company. Please know that no one will do this practice perfectly, and that is not the goal. The goal, rather, is to simply present yourself to Christ. When we make room to be still and be present with him, we are communicating to Christ, ourselves, and those around us that being still and knowing God through communion with him is an important and life-giving pursuit. This discipline also fosters our surrender, dependence and trust in Christ Jesus as we seek to completely lay aside our agendas, tasks, ability to prove, desire to fix, etc.

I encourage you to start with just two minutes in this practice and as you give yourself to it over time, you can add additional minutes. Here are the simple steps:

Centering Prayer steps:

1. Take a centering breath and ask the Holy Spirit to come.
2. Ask for a sacred word or image as the symbol of your intention to commune with God's presence and action within.
3. Sitting comfortably and with eyes closed, settle briefly and silently introduce the sacred word or image as the focus and anchor of this time.
4. Be still and rest in the presence of Christ. When thoughts arise (which is natural and OK), return ever-so-gently to the sacred word or image.
5. At the end of the prayer period (you might like to set a timer), remain in silence with eyes closed as you start to wiggle your fingers and toes, bringing yourself back to the present space and moment.

Read more about spiritual practices in Rev. Metcalf's article series at these links:

- [FirstChurchTulsa.org/Practice](https://www.firstchurchtulsa.org/Practice)
- [FirstChurchTulsa.org/Silence](https://www.firstchurchtulsa.org/Silence)
- [FirstChurchTulsa.org/Breath](https://www.firstchurchtulsa.org/Breath)
- [FirstChurchTulsa.org/Reading](https://www.firstchurchtulsa.org/Reading)
- [FirstChurchTulsa.org/Children](https://www.firstchurchtulsa.org/Children)



About the author: Rev. Julia Metcalf oversees the Next Generation Ministry. She is a graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary where she received a Master of Divinity in 2020. She is very interested in the spiritual disciplines and how they can enrich our faith journeys, as well as what personal relationship with Jesus Christ looks like for both young and old. Julia serves on the board of directors of Camp Loughridge and serves as a mentor to the Oklahoma Student Leadership Forum.



Living with grief

By Rev. Wally Johnson

Grief seems an apt topic for the Lenten Season. This is a season in which we quiet ourselves with the reality that we are not God and that He is. We run to him over and over again as we bow ourselves in humility and confession.

The message from the prophet Joel – return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; seems to set things up pretty well.

But what strikes me every year is the call of God to return to Him with all of our heart rather than return to God when we get our stuff together. And yet, that is the consistent call of God to us.

If God says return to me with all your heart, I think that maybe the implication is that we give our hearts to a whole lot of things that are not God.

If the invitation is to return to God with our whole heart, that suggests that we often give Him just a part ... a part we are comfortable with.

The story is told about a Carmelite nun who found contemplative prayer to be so hard because her thoughts would wander a thousand times during a 20-minute prayer session.

She was sure her teacher, Thomas Merton, would rebuke her for such a failure, so she was surprised when instead Merton said that her wandering thoughts were just a thousand opportunities to return to God.

Grief is a part of each of our lives. Perhaps the loss of a loved one, the loss of a relationship, the loss of a job ... it takes many forms. But the common denominator is grief and sorrow, and the role they play in all our lives.

C.S. Lewis has much to say about the role of grief, sorrow and the interplay with joy. He once wrote, "Die before you die. There is no chance after." Another reminds us that we are to live like we are dying. Moses would pray, "Lord teach me to number my days that I might apply my heart to wisdom."

Grief is not something to be "gotten through." It is not simply a series of stages that we can mark off much like a to-do list. Grief calls us to sit, to ponder, to reflect, to pray.

We do not recover from grief. Jerry Sittser writes, "We can recover from broken limbs, not amputations."

"Catastrophic loss will transform us or destroy us, but it will never leave us the same."

– Jerry Sittser

This depth of sorrow is not something to be fixed in us. It is the sign of a healthy soul, not a sick soul. Jesus declares, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

No matter how painful the hurt or how deep the grief, sorrow is good for the soul. It serves to strip life down to the basics. What is really important and of value in my life.

Grief makes us alive to the present. That present may be a sea of nothingness in many respects, but under that sea is a world that is teeming with life. Jean-Pierre De Caussade calls this the "Sacrament of the present moment."

Sittser writes, "This present moment, this eternal now, is sacred because, however painful it is, it is the only time we have to be alive and to know God. The past is gone, the future not yet here. But the present is alive to us."

In this present moment, return to God with your whole heart. Acknowledge your confusion, your hurt, your grief. You will find His arms open wide to embrace you.

That's what Lent is ... a thousand opportunities to return to God with all you heart.



About the author: Rev. Wally Johnson is the senior pastor of 1st Church of Sapulpa ... his second term of service at that church. He recently left First Presbyterian Church of Tulsa where he served as our parish associate for two years after serving as the senior pastor of Northminster Presbyterian Church in Sarasota, Florida. He is a passionate follower of Jesus Christ and is blessed with a wonderful wife who "puts up with me, five kids (grown and raised) and six grandkids."



Preparation for ministry

By Nick McMillan

Recently, First Presbyterian Church of Tulsa was blessed to witness the ordination and installation of Reverend Julia Metcalf. Her ordination service was the culmination of a long process of study and growth, including her call, seminary education and field education. Completing preparation for ministry is a testament to Julia's faithfulness, dedication, and hard work from late night study sessions at Princeton spent poring over scripture, to shepherding youth and young adults as a pastor in Paris.

Importantly, this preparation also included intentional and thoughtful maintenance of long-term relationships with representatives of her church back home in Tulsa. Developing and maintaining these relationships over time was both intrinsically rewarding as well as part of a multi-step process designed to nurture aspiring ministers of word and sacrament, aptly titled the **"Preparation for Ministry Process."**



Rev. Julia Metcalf

Under the care of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, the steps Julia took in her education and professional development were tracked, monitored, and shepherded with all the decency and order befitting the Presbyterian tradition. In 2021, Julia was certified

by the Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery as "ready to receive a call," which not only refers to a grace given by God but also formally recognizes this grace as the final stage of a process of interest, inquiry, candidacy and certification. Our church has been walking with five candidates in this process including another child of the congregation, **Sam DeVore**, who delivered a sermon in Stephenson Hall last August.

Under the supervision of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, candidates can pursue either the role of teaching elder or commissioned ruling elder. The differences between these two paths include the length and requirements of preparation. The process to become a teaching elder is more involved and arduous and usually occurs concomitantly with seminary. The role of commissioned ruling elder is a part-time position that meets a current need for leadership in many churches within our Presbytery that are not large enough to afford a full-time minister.

Through this preparation process, the Committee on Preparation for Ministry works with candidates to love, listen, correct, encourage, laugh, cry and care.



Sam DeVore delivering a sermon at First Church Tulsa in August of 2022.

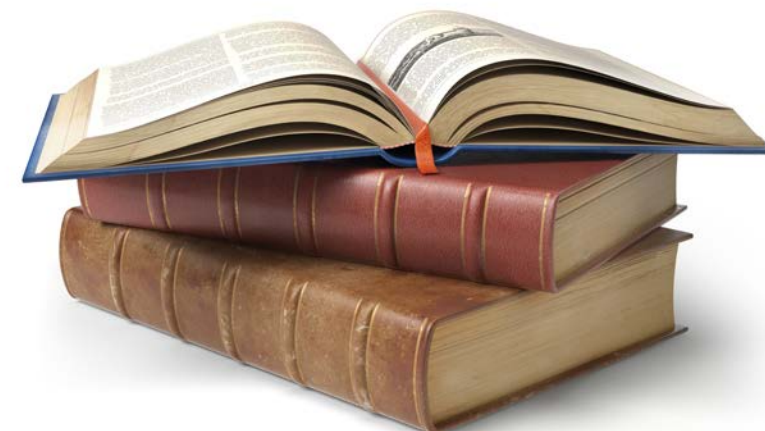
Each candidate is assigned a liaison from the committee with whom they maintain correspondence through emails, coffee shop meetups, and phone calls for guidance, fellowship and support in discernment. Candidates are also typically assigned a second liaison from the Session of the church of which they are under care. Candidates and committee members complete forms and submit responses to specific prompts throughout the process to track, document and certify a call when that day comes. Notably, while these requirements are generally like other Presbyteries, they will not be the same, which makes the role of liaison crucial.

Of the five candidates that our church currently cares for in this process, two are inquiring to become teaching elders and three are candidates to become commissioned ruling elders.



Rev. Dan Hutchinson is a member of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry.

Church elders and pastors comprise the Committee on Preparation for Ministry. Reverend Dan Hutchinson chaired this committee in past years and his own walk through the process came at a pivotal moment in his life and education. "The times with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry and with mentors provided important opportunities for me to discern my call. I changed through the process and hopefully learned some humility," said Dan. In addition to learning practical aspects of discernment and humility, Dan learned about the careful governance and oversight of the Presbyterian church and said, "I had not grown up in the denomination and had a lot of questions. I learned a lot about being Presbyterian, both in terms of our polity, how we are governed and run, and our theology." Dan regards preparation for ministry as a moment for both prayer and discernment and hopes that by knowing more about the process, congregants will pray for candidates under our care.



Sam DeVore and Rev. Dan Hutchinson

For Sam DeVore, preparation is a way for candidates to assess fitness for a congregation culturally and doctrinally. In discerning, Sam has also considered how the challenges that face congregations change over time, including whether a congregation is in a phase of preservation and renewal, needing guidance back to theological fidelity, or is already soundly established, faithful and growing. Sam's sister and First Church elder, Elizabeth DeVore, hopes that through this process Sam will become a good pastor.

When asked what becoming a good pastor means, Sam described the qualities of a good pastor as, "humility, balancing grace and truth, a passion for discipleship and compassion."

Sam seeks to share the gospel relationally through individual authenticity and loyalty in the many aspects of a congregant's walk with Christ. During his return to Tulsa to preach last summer, Sam sensed the support of a caring congregation and affirmed, "People hope for the best, and you feel that." Sam plans to graduate Seminary in May 2024.

This article is the first in a series of three stories featuring each person currently going through the training process and sponsored by First Church. Watch future issues of Tidings for stories on Zack Rivers, Judith Land, Faith Wambugu and Laura Stockbridge.



About the author: Nick McMillan joined First Church in June 2021. He enjoys teaching and leading small group discussions for Exodus high school Sunday school and is a frequent participant in the "Before the Rooster Crows" Bible study. He is grateful for this opportunity to learn more about the preparation process and current candidates.



The Kerr Chapel is new again

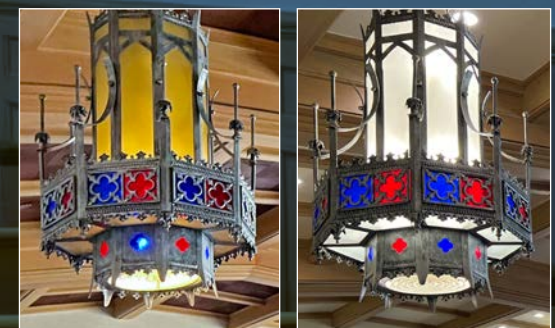
By Ron Pearson



View before the Kerr Chapel renovation.



View after the renovation in Kerr Chapel.



Before and after view of the updated lanterns in Kerr Chapel.

One of the most familiar and time-honored spaces at First Church is the Kerr Chapel, dedicated in 1955 and named in honor of Dr. Charles Kerr, who served as pastor from 1900-1940. The Chapel is a much-favored venue for small weddings, memorial services and other events which require a seating capacity of about 110 people.

In May of 2021, the Session approved a proposal to acquire a new organ for the Chapel to replace the existing organ which had served us well but was showing its age after 80 years of heavy use. A contract was signed in January 2022 with Foley-Baker, Inc., of Tolland, Connecticut; the same company which carried out a very successful renovation of the Sanctuary organ in 2013-14. Work on the new organ is progressing on schedule, with delivery expected in the Fall of 2023.

The new Chapel organ will include 725 pipes, compared to about 400 in the previous organ. All mechanical and electrical systems will be new, and the existing oak console will be equipped with new manual keyboards, pedalboard, adjustable height bench and a refurbished exterior. Some of the previous organ's pipes will be voiced and retained, with the remaining pipes being new.



The Kerr Chapel organ, showing its age after 80 years of heavy use, will be replaced in the fall of 2023.

A special feature of the new organ will be the addition of 20 decorative pipes displayed in the wood grilles, 10 on each side, with these pipes painted to harmonize with room colors. Each pipe will be stenciled with an artistic rendition of a Christian symbol. This aspect of organ design was once a standard feature of organs for centuries, and it has become popular again. Local artist Ronda Roush has enthusiastically agreed to create this decorative element, and we are excited about the visual enhancement of the Chapel that will result from her work.



Local artist Ronda Roush will stencil decorative artwork onto the organ pipes housed behind these wood grilles.

Gifts to the organ fund allowed us to include further enhancements and improvements to the Chapel. The original dark brown ceiling material had become worn in appearance, and it was replaced with new sheet rock which is painted a light color to match the walls.

This resulted in a brighter and more cheerful appearance, and a livelier and more resonant acoustical environment for both music and the spoken word. Additional ceiling lights were installed, and a new sound/audio system replaced the old one. The large lanterns which hang from the ceiling were refitted with white frosted glass, replacing the previous glass which had a faded yellow hue.

The funding for the new Chapel organ and related projects has been provided by many generous members and friends of First Church, and we are extremely grateful for the support of all those who have made it possible to enhance the Kerr Chapel and equip it for future generations.

Soli Deo Gloria!



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.



Good shepherds

Eight ministers making a difference

By Joan Williams Hoar

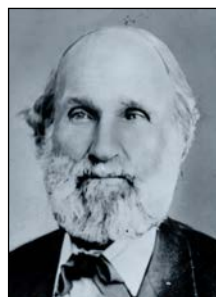
What makes a good pastor? One "job description" outlines the responsibilities of the minister this way:

- 1) Tell - proclaim the word of God.
- 2) Teach - provide scripture exposition.
- 3) Tend - respond to human needs.

The under shepherds, our pastors, must be attuned to the needs of the flock. Or, in the words of Pope Francis, "smell of the sheep," as he lives among them.

Scripture states, "Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks," Proverbs 27:23. Eight names stand out among the many who understood this, and they are profiled in this story.

The **Rev. Robert Loughridge** rode horseback from mission outposts to Tulsa Town in 1883 to preach on Sunday, August 19, to a crowd in front of the J.M. Hall store.



Rev. Robert Loughridge

First Church, organized on October 5, 1885, with 15 Creek charter members, was served by numerous ministers, but not until **Dr. Charles W. Kerr's** pastorage did the congregation have sufficient funding to employ a full-time minister. The Rev. Dr. Kerr began his tenure in January 1900 and oversaw the growth of the Indian Territory congregation from the wooden frame mission school to the current location. During this time, members were instrumental in the founding of numerous community organizations. A 1911 neo-classical Sanctuary at 7th and Boston served until 1925 when the Gothic design Sanctuary was completed. Dr. Kerr served from 1900 until 1941.



Dr. Charles W. Kerr

Dr. Edmond F. Miller, succeeded Dr. Kerr as pastor on October 1, 1941. The first Christmas Eve "candlelight" service held by any Protestant Church in Tulsa was held in the Sanctuary, the domed neo-classical building razed; and the Kerr Memorial Building dedicated. Dr. Ed Miller retired on March 13, 1956, at which time First Church was the second largest Presbyterian congregation in the United States.



Dr. Edmond F. Miller

On February 10, 1957, **Dr. Bryant W. Kirkland**, succeeded Dr. E. Miller as pastor. During his tenure, the church acquired the 39-acre YWCA "Camp Parthenia," and renamed it "Camp Loughridge." A 9:30 a.m. Sunday Service was begun and the 11 a.m. service televised. The standing room only crowds necessitated extending the public address system into the Library, Chapel and Junior Auditorium.



Dr. Bryant W. Kirkland

Dr. Kirkland resigned in January of 1962 at which time the congregation membership was 5,100. The **Dr. William J. Wiseman, Std.** succeeded Dr. Kirkland as pastor in May of 1963. During Wiseman's tenure, the church continued participation in the larger community, including the Lent and Advent noon lecture series.



About the author:

Joan Williams Hoar is a First Church elder and immediate past historian and chair of the History and Archives Committee. Joan serves as Docent Ministry Committee chair.

During Dr. Wiseman's pastorage, the chancel area was remodeled, and the Holman Hunt "Light of the World" window was replaced. Wiseman retired in 1984.



Dr. William J. Wiseman

Dr. Ernest J. Lewis accepted the call to First Church and served from 1985 to 1991, as senior pastor. During this time the membership rolls were brought up to date. His sermon on commitment to the church resulted in the budget being easily reached.



Dr. Ernest J. Lewis

Dr. James Miller assumed the pastor position in 1992, a position that he still holds today. Dr. Miller's time has been marked with an increase in community commitment and active role in the international community. A building and renovation maintenance program added needed space for the growth of new programs and services, including a major presence via technology.



Dr. James Miller

Dr. Ryan Moore joined the staff in 2013, left and returned to serve as co-pastor from 2016 to 2019. During Rev. Moore's tenure, emphasis was placed on programming for young children – our "Little Lambs," and the fine arts. Ryan is currently senior pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Nashville.



Dr. Ryan Moore

The "roaring lions" that our early pastors dealt with may seem very different from today's contemporary issues, but the needs continue for the pastor to remain vigilant and aware as they live among us.

And, what is the significance of the number 8? Notice the pulpit and the baptismal font. In religious symbology, eight represents hope and resurrection, our Lenten message.



The Sanctuary baptismal font and pulpit both have eight sides. In religious symbology, the number 8 represents hope and resurrection.



The First Presbyterian Church of Tulsa Foundation trustees want everyone to be a part of the Foundation and have created a birthday club. In 2023, our goal for every member or friend of the congregation to become a part of the foundation by donating the amount in dollars equal to their age each year. Young and old and in between, we want everyone to celebrate the blessing of life and share blessings with the foundation that will live in perpetuity.

The money raised will be a part of the foundation's Forward Fund ... an integral part of the life of the church which supports programs for everyone from infants to those in homebound care.

The First Presbyterian Tulsa Foundation was established in 1962 with 88 shares of stock and has grown over the last 50 years to an endowment more than \$20 million. Every gift to the foundation by a member of our Church is invested and managed by the Foundation Trustees and will grow over time. In the last 25 years, the foundation has distributed more than \$11 million to our Church.

It's easy to join by donating your age online at **FirstChurchTulsa.org/Give** and select "Make a donation." Use the pull-down menu to find "Birthday Club" and you're done. If you drop off or send a check, please note "Foundation Birthday Club" in the memo section. To learn more about the birthday club or the foundation call Katie Williams at 918-292-9063.

"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



About the author:

Katie Williams is a child of the church and currently serving as the Foundation Director for First Presbyterian. She loves to tell your story.

Pastors' Top 10 to read



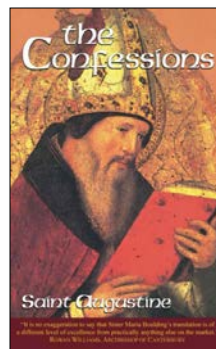
By Rev. Julia Metcalf



Ignatian Adventure: Experiencing the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius in Daily Life

by Kevin O'Brien

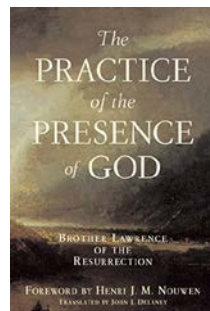
There is no better guide than St. Ignatius Loyola if one desires to discover how faith and everyday life can thrive together. In "The Ignatian Adventure", Kevin O'Brien follows St. Ignatius's lead and offers today's time-strapped individual a unique way of "making" the spiritual exercises in daily life.



The Confessions

by St. Augustine

Heartfelt, incisive and timeless, "The Confessions" of Saint Augustine has captivated readers for more than 1,500 years. Retelling the story of his long struggle with faith and ultimate conversion, the first such spiritual memoir ever recorded, Saint Augustine traces a story of sin, regret and redemption that is both deeply personal and, at the same time, universal.



The Practice of the Presence of God

by Brother Lawrence

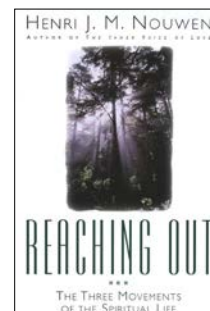
Brother Lawrence was a man of humble beginnings who discovered the greatest secret of living in the kingdom of God here on earth. It is the art of "practicing the presence of God in one single act that does not end." He often stated that it is God who paints Himself in the depths of our soul. We must merely open our hearts to receive Him and His loving presence. For centuries this unparalleled classic has given both blessing and instruction to those who can be content with nothing less than knowing God in all His majesty and feeling His loving presence throughout each simple day.



The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry

by John Mark Comer

Too often we treat the symptoms of toxicity in our modern world instead of trying to pinpoint the cause. A growing number of voices are pointing at hurry, or busyness, as a root of much evil. Within the pages of this book, you'll find a fascinating roadmap to staying emotionally healthy and spiritually alive in the chaos of the modern world.



Reaching Out

by Henri Nouwen

With the clarity and depth characteristic of the classics, this spiritual bestseller lays out a perceptive and insightful plan for living a spiritual life and achieving the ultimate goal of that life – union with God. Nouwen views our spiritual "ascent" as evolving in three movements.



Reading Theologically

by Eric D. Barreto, editor

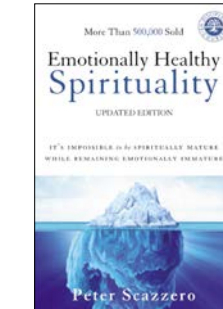
Reading is one of the basic skills a student needs. But reading is not just an activity of the eyes and the brain. "Reading Theologically", edited by Barreto, brings together eight seminary educators from a variety of backgrounds to explore what it means to be a reader in a seminary context to read theologically.



Getting Involved with God

by Ellen Davis

With sound scholarship and her own vivid translations from the Hebrew, Old Testament professor Ellen Davis teaches us a spiritually engaged method of reading scripture.



Emotionally Healthy Spirituality

by Peter Scazzero

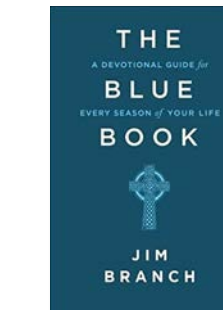
Scazzero shares new stories and principles as he outlines his journey and the signs of emotionally unhealthy spirituality. Then he provides seven biblical, reality-tested steps to become emotionally mature.



Redeeming Sex

by Debra Hirsch

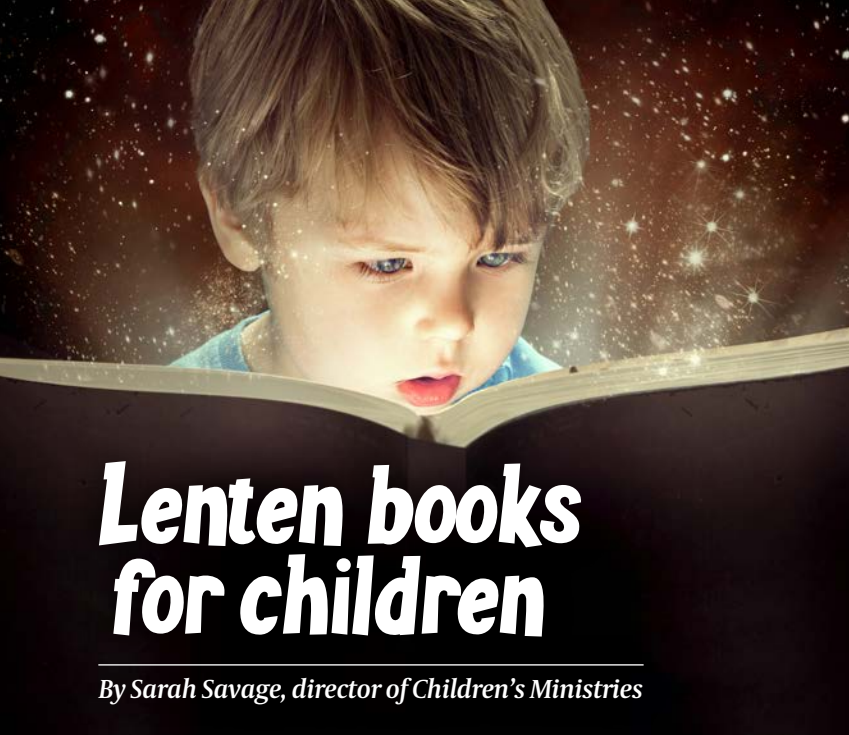
Hirsch has seen it firsthand in meaningful lifelong relationships with LGBT friends and neighbors, in Christian fellowships and in movements that have held a concern for people created in God's image and a high view of the Bible's teaching on sexuality in constructive tension. When you consider the world from the perspective of God's kingdom mission, it turns out the smoke clears and a redemptive imagination takes root. Discover a holistic, biblical vision of sex and gender that honors God and offers good news to the world.



The Blue Book

by Jim Branch

A year-long devotional guide designed to offer space and structure. Scripture and prayers, as well as readings and reflections for your daily time with God. The hope is that through using this book you might discover the ancient rhythms that were whispered into you when God breathed you into being.



Lenten books for children

By Sarah Savage, director of Children's Ministries

Lent is a wonderful time of spiritual growth for families. It is a time of learning about the ministry, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. These books are a great resource for devotions and activities for the 40 days of Lent and can be purchased through Amazon. Families can do a devotional each evening and include the activities during the week.

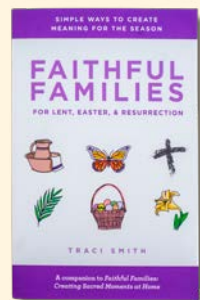
The Garden, the Curtain and the Cross by Carl Laferton

This beautifully illustrated hardback book, "The Garden, the Curtain and the Cross" by Carl Laferton and illustrated by Catalina Echeverri, takes children on a journey from the garden of Eden to God's perfect new creation. Through an engaging Bible overview, children will discover that 'because of our sin, we can't go in' but because of Jesus' victory on the cross, an even better garden awaits us.



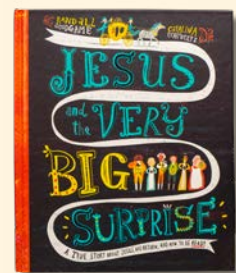
Faithful Families by Traci Smith

Anyone who helps children grow in their faith will appreciate this hands-on resource designed to help children through the Lenten season. Featuring meaningful practices, activities, and prayers for the Lent and Easter season, "Faithful Families for Lent, Easter and Resurrection" will engage children of all ages.



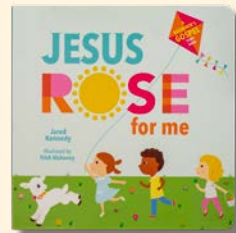
Jesus and the Very Big Surprise by Catalina Echeverri and Randall Goodgame

Jesus is coming back—and when he does, there will be an amazing party! In this adaptation of Luke 12:35-38, Goodgame explains that the Lord didn't say exactly when his return will happen, but we can make sure we're ready by loving him and his people.



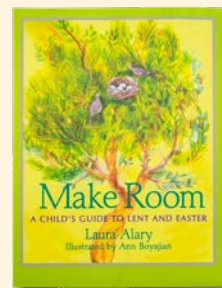
Jesus Rose for Me by Jared Kennedy

Every Easter, we celebrate that Jesus Christ is more powerful than death. But what does that mean for your little one? "Jesus Rose for Me" helps toddlers and preschoolers understand the true, Christian meaning of Easter in a personal, memorable way. This board book is a part of "The Beginner's Gospel Story Bible" series. For children ages three to seven, this beautifully illustrated book begins with Palm Sunday and ends with Easter, when Jesus rose for us. Children will learn that Jesus Christ is our king, and that everyone who trusts in him is part of his forever family.



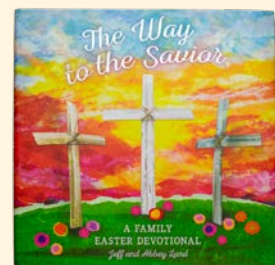
Make Room by Laura Alary

Lent can be a difficult season for children. Unlike Advent, which is filled with delightful anticipation and growing light, Lent is a journey through dark and frightening places. "Make Room" presents Lent as a special time for creating a welcoming space for God by weaving together episodes from the life of Jesus with a child's reflections on how these stories can shape their own choices and actions throughout the season.



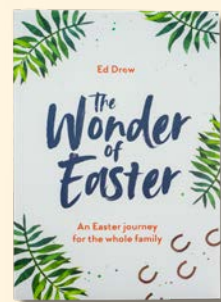
The Way to the Savior by Jeff and Abbey Land

Bring the family together to reflect on the importance of Christ and the true meaning of Easter! This 40-day devotional explores and celebrates eight aspects of Lent: forgiveness, hope, trust, thanksgiving, love, commitment, obedience and Jesus' last days. Filled with Scriptures, discussion questions, fun activities, and prayers, it will become a keepsake and annual tradition.



The Wonder of Easter by Ed Drew

Celebrate the limitless wonder of Easter with this flexible, easy-to-use family devotional. Walk together through Luke's Gospel to discover why the account of Jesus' death and resurrection is the most amazing story ever told. Includes 34 days in seven weeks of devotionals for the Easter journey.



About the author: Sarah Savage is the director of Children's Ministries at First Church. She joined staff in 2019 and has many years of experience in children's ministries. She and her husband Jim have four children and are members of the church.

Chancel Choir performs

The First Church Chancel Choir is presenting their annual spring concert titled, "Singing the life of Christ from prophecy to resurrection." The music tells the story of Christ including Scripture readings and choral anthems that remind us of his birth, earthly ministry, crucifixion and resurrection.

The concert will feature our children's and youth choirs, the First Church Choristers, Celebration Singers and a professional orchestra.

The concert will take place Sunday, April 23 at 5 p.m. in the Sanctuary with a reception to follow.



Making a difference one child at a time

By Jan Creveling

First Presbyterian Church of Tulsa member, **Karen McMillan**, traveled to Aduku, Uganda, for the fifth time since sponsoring Petra Kids Ministries (PKM) students, but the first time in three years due to the pandemic. She went with Petra, the executive director, to meet with some of the school administrators and visit homes of her seven sponsored students.



Member Karen McMillan with students in Uganda.

She was thrilled to see their growth developmentally, spiritually and academically. She noted that they were taller than three years ago and thankfully very healthy. They were very confident in using English in their communications with Karen, but more talkative when Petra

spoke with them in their native language. They delightfully shared stories about their classes and activities at the school.

A highlight for Karen was being with 14-year-old **Dora** who is going into the eighth grade this year. Karen asked if she could pray for Dora and her family sharing that it was a very moving moment and brought her close to joyous tears to see how Dora had grown in her faith as she expressed her love for Jesus.

PKM is visiting Uganda July 12 -23, 2023, to see the newly constructed mission house ... a location for visitors to worship with the students, teachers and their caregivers. We will witness what God has accomplished through this ministry. For information, email or call petra@petrakids.org or 918-277-9112.



Fourteen-year-old Dora who is sponsored by member Karen McMillan through Petra Kids in Uganda.



About the author: Jan Creveling is a First Church member, past chair of the PKM Board and currently on the PKM Advisory Board. Jan and Dwight sponsor five students at the PKM Christian School.

Parish Register

Welcome new members Winter 2022-23



Danielle Balletto



Ryan Graeler



Rita Graeler



Patrick Jones



David McIntosh



Cathie McIntosh



Kaye Pickering



Marsha Rose



Albert Usigbe

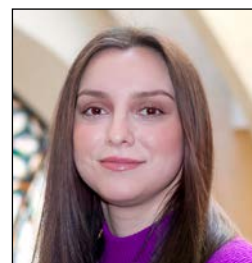


Ready for the next steps to membership?

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.

Welcome new staff



Hannah Damron
Ministry Assistant for
Mission, Outreach and TIF



Devin Schnake
Maintenance

The sacrament of baptism

Benjamin Joseph O'Hara, son of **Allie** and **Dan O'Hara**, was baptized on October 16

Violet Marie O'Hara, daughter of **Allie** and **Dan O'Hara**, was baptized on October 16

Savannah Nsien, daughter of **Megan** and **Michael Nsien**, was baptized on October 30

Charles Bretton Crane, son of **Brett** and **Caitlin Crane**, was baptized on December 11

The celebration of Christian marriage

Emma Cantrell married **Dalton Myatt** on November 7

With gratitude for the resurrection

Glenda Goodwin, a member since 2006, died on October 5

Mary Fitzpatrick, a member since 1979, died on November 2

Terry Thomas, a member since 2004, died on November 27

George Savage, a member since 1991, died on December 5

Bertha Lou Glenn, a member since 1960, died on December 11

Richard Teubner, a member since 1942, died on December 14

Weekly worship schedule

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

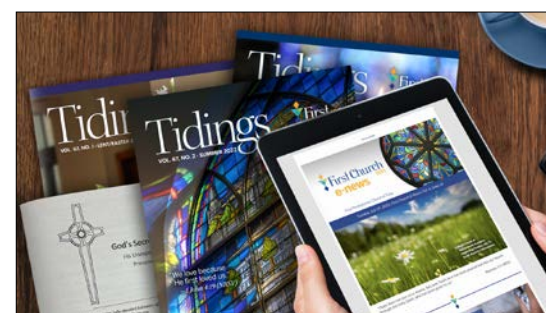
11:00 a.m. Great Hall, Tulsa International Fellowship

Read E-News or the website calendar at FirstChurchTulsa.org/Events for worship changes or additions.



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 where a pastor on call will be notified, 918-584-4701; or contact Paula or Mark Peterson with the **Guild of Intercessors** at 918-296-5548 or mandppeterson@msn.com.



First Church Tulsa publications

Find all First Church Tulsa publications including E-News, issues of Tidings magazine and Sunday bulletins on our website at: FirstChurchTulsa.org/Read.

First Church Tulsa social media

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.



First Church merchandise

Looking for a new sweatshirt or hoodie for spring? Check out our apparel and specialty store online. FirstChurchTulsa.org/CafePress.



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. 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, Kathy Wilson

Contributors: Jan Creveling, Joan Williams Hoar, Rev. Dan Hutchinson, Rev. Wally Johnson, Nick McMillan, Rev. Julia Metcalf, Dr. Jim Miller, Ron Pearson, Sarah Savage and Katie Williams.

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

Designer: Paul Marsh

Editor: Louann Buhlinger

2023 SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Lent & Eastertide

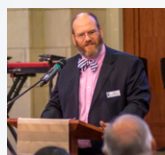
Lent begins with an Ash Wednesday worship service when we are reminded that, "From dust you have come and to dust you will return." During Lent, we are invited to "Stay close to the master," focusing on our union with Christ through baptism whereby we die to our old self so that we might live anew with Him.



Ash Wednesday dinner and worship

Wednesday, February 22
Soup dinner at 5:30 p.m., Stephenson Hall
Worship service at 6:30 p.m., Sanctuary

Please join us for this meaningful service on the first day of Lent and a holy day of prayer. During the service you can elect to have ashes placed on your forehead which is a sign of our humanity and a reminder of our mortality.



Wednesday Lenten Conversations

Wednesdays, March 1 - April 12
6:15 p.m., Stephenson Hall

Following dinner, participate in round table discussions on Dr. John Ortberg's Lenten devotionals.



Palm Sunday worship

Sunday, April 2

Join us in the morning for Palm Sunday worship. Celebrate Christ's entrance into Jerusalem waving palm branches and singing "Hosanna!"

Worship service times to be announced.



Maundy Thursday

Thursday, April 6, 7:30 p.m.
Sanctuary

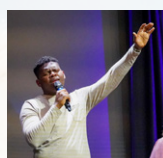
This is the service of darkness. Tenebrae means shadows, and so our worship will include an experience of some of the shadows that Christ endured. At the close of the service the bell will toll seven times to represent the fullness of Christ's sacrifice for us. Communion is also offered.



Good Friday worship

Friday, April 7, noon
Sanctuary

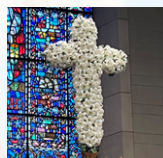
Join us for the Seven Words of Jesus from the Cross. "Good" Friday is the day Christians intentionally remember Jesus' crucifixion and the sacrifice he made on our behalf.



TIF Good Friday worship

Friday, April 7, 7-10 p.m.
Great Hall

Join Tulsa International Fellowship in the Great Hall for an evening of worship.



Easter worship

Resurrection Day Sunday, April 9
"He is Risen"

Celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ with us on Easter morning. Bring your family and friends for this joyous time of worship. Worship service times to be announced.

Upcoming worship:

National Day of Prayer service

Thursday, May 4, 2023, 11:30 a.m.; Courtyard

Ascension of Our Lord service

Thursday, May 18, 2023, 11:30 a.m.; Courtyard

*Watch 11 a.m. Sunday worship on [Facebook.com/FirstChurchTulsa](https://www.facebook.com/FirstChurchTulsa).



First Presbyterian Church of Tulsa
[FirstChurchTulsa.org](https://www.FirstChurchTulsa.org)

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