



# First Connect

February 2026

# Letter from Sarah



Dear Church Family,

I sat in front of my computer screen for hours, not knowing where to start or what to say. I read passage after passage and prayed. My prayers are many. All our prayers are many. What does the Lord require of us at a time when brokenness and division and fear are rising like the tide? How do we walk with integrity as the children of God when it is hard to know what to do or where to start?

As I prayed this week, I kept going back in my mind to this verse in 2 Chronicles 7. Solomon and all of Israel had finished building the Temple for the Lord. When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. God's very presence and power filled the Temple, and for the rest of their lives, they would remember and testify to this moment.

And the people did the only reasonable thing to do. They fell with their faces to the ground and worshipped the Lord God Almighty, saying, "HE is good; HIS love endures forever." When Solomon had finished all he had in mind to do, the Lord appeared to him that night and said, "If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

Every part of that passage stuck with me: "If my people who are called by my name..." If every person who lives under the lordship of Christ, every professing believer in Jesus Christ, would fall on their knees in prayer and seek his face - just imagine what would happen. Imagine the change that would sweep through our nation if all Christians took the teachings of Jesus seriously above all else, above party and policy and position.

Just Christians being Christlike. What a thing that would be.

Later in John's Gospel, Jesus will tell his disciples how to live, honor him, and be his disciples. He said, "A new command I give you, love one another. As I have loved you, so you must also love one another. By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." That's where we start. We start with prayer, humility, and love. We do the next right thing each day to bring about a more just world. I want to live in a world where Christians behaved like Christ.

And it starts with me. So I will stand on the side of Christ. Always. My heart belongs to the Lord, and I am bound by my oath and promise of surrender. Every day, it is my responsibility to wake up, pray up, and then live up to the person I have been created to be. I am committed to reading the Word of God every day and putting into practice the teachings of Christ. I will serve the people he served. I will care for those he cared for. I will kneel down in the dirt with those left for dead. I will speak love and truth and be quick to seek forgiveness for words spoken in haste. I will lead with love and grace. I will be the voice for the voiceless. I will look to the Lord today for him to provide my daily bread and trust him with my tomorrows. I will do what good I can wherever I can. I will always be on the side of grace and love. I belong to Jesus, come what may. I will bear his image as best I can and live his teachings as faithfully as I am able.

And, it starts with you. He's calling you to a life of surrender, a life of following him and living like him. He's calling you to not despair but to live in hope and in trust. He's calling you to lead with love, grace, and truth. He is with us and for us. He will never leave us. So let's trust him enough to do the next right thing.

Let's put our love in action one day at a time.

# Upcoming Events

## **“Souper” Bowl Soup & Chili Cook-Off, February 8**

Bring your award-winning chili or soup to share to the FBCOKC “Souper” Bowl Cook-Off! If you decide not to enter your chili or soup - toppers, dippers, and desserts are all needed as well. Join us in the dining hall after service to see who will take home the Golden Ladle. Hope to see you there.

## **Rick's Café, February 15**

Do you have any questions about the Bible, faith, or what it means to follow Jesus in our world? Rick Johnson, a seminary professor and member of FBCOKC, will be hosting "Rick's Café" in the Parlor at 6:00pm. Come with your questions for Rick as we learn and grow together in faith! Childcare available.

## **“Rooted” 60+ Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum Visit, February 19**

We hope you can join us as we travel the Route 66: From Trails to Truck Stops exhibit.

Tickets are \$13 each and please give your payment to Toni by 2/16. Signup sheet is in the Commons or email [tadams@fbcokc.org](mailto:tadams@fbcokc.org)! After the tour we will enjoy lunch in the museum café! We will meet at the museum at 10:30am.

## **Disciple Now, February 20-22**

I hope your youth will join me in the Disciple Now Weekend. We will dive into God's word, have fun fellowship time, time to serve others, and grow as a youth group. The cost is \$30 and this will cover a shirt and food for the weekend. I'll get you more information as we get closer. The theme is Outcast.

### **Outsiders welcome.**

*We see outcasts everyday*—people who fit under a different stereotype, don't look like us, like what we like, or believe the same things. It's easy to walk away from the outcast, leaving them forever in that category, but Jesus never did. Instead, he walked into the difficulty of their lives to bring them the ultimate insider experience—belonging in his family.

## **Youth Lead Sunday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>**

The youth will help lead us in worship on Sunday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> after their weekend of Disciple Now. They will lead us in song, prayer, scripture, and we will have a table talk time with the youth for the sermon portion. I hope you can come and support our youth.

## **Kid's Night Out, February 27<sup>th</sup>**

Gotta Catch'em All! Did you know February 27<sup>th</sup> is National Pokémon Day? We will be celebrating with a Pokémon themed Kid's Night Out! Wear any Pokémon gear you might have or bring any Pokémon plush! We will start in the gym at 6pm with dinner and end in the kid's area with a movie at 9pm! Can't wait to see your kid(s) there!

# Recent Events





# Kids and Youth

A fun fact about me is that I love musical theatre! It has shaped my life in so many ways. My first show was when I was 7 and I saw Cathy Rigby in Peter Pan. Granted, I ran out of the theatre because people are not supposed to fly across stage and it startled me... but once I realized the magic of musical theatre, I fell in love. I was part of the musicals each year of high school, whether in the production or working backstage. The songs are on repeat in my car and I perform them like I am on that stage every time I drive. I was listening to "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" a few weeks ago, it is a musical I did my sophomore year of high school. The last song is called "Happiness" and the characters talk about what happiness means to them. Some say it's sharing a sandwich, 2 kinds of ice cream, climbing a tree, or catching a butterfly and setting it free. The big swell in the song comes when they say, "Happiness is morning and evening, daytime, and nighttime too. For happiness is anyone and anything at all, that's loved by you." As we enter February, remember those things that makes you happy and all the people and things that are loved by you. Remember that you make God happy and he loves everything about you. Share his love and happiness with others.

## **Toy & Book Drive**

We are doing a toy and book drive to refresh our nursery rooms! We are looking for toys and books for infants through 4 year-olds. Bring new or used toys and books to the Commons. The kid's ministry thanks you for your donations!

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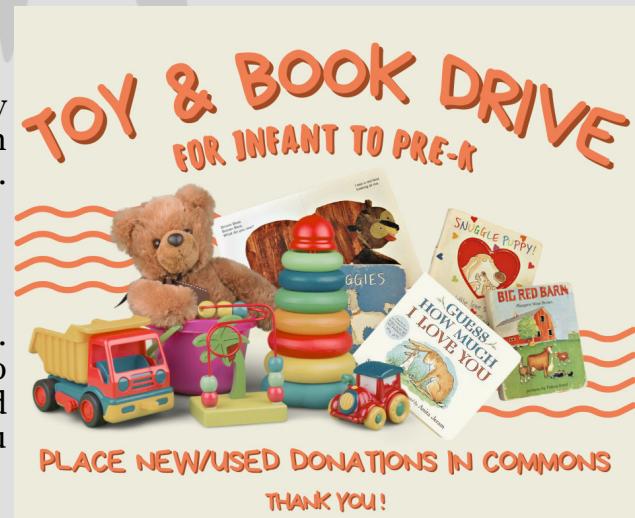
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# Missions



I just finished an incredible novel by Leif Enger titled "I Cheerfully Refuse". If you've never heard of Leif Enger, check him out! I love to read. Words have a way of communicating the deepest truths of who we are, who God is, and our purpose in this world. Language is an essential part of who we are as human beings. Even more important than that is how language enables us to read the story of God. To know God and be known by Him.

Can you imagine not having access to a Bible in your native tongue? We discover who God is by reading the scriptures. Often, I take for granted that I am able to read the story of Jesus in my native language.

This month we are highlighting the work of Aaron and Grace Ogburn who are one of our global ministry partners! FBCOKC is proud to support the Ogburns (Aaron, Grace, and their sweet daughter Eloise) who serve in Milan, Italy with Pioneer Bible Translators.

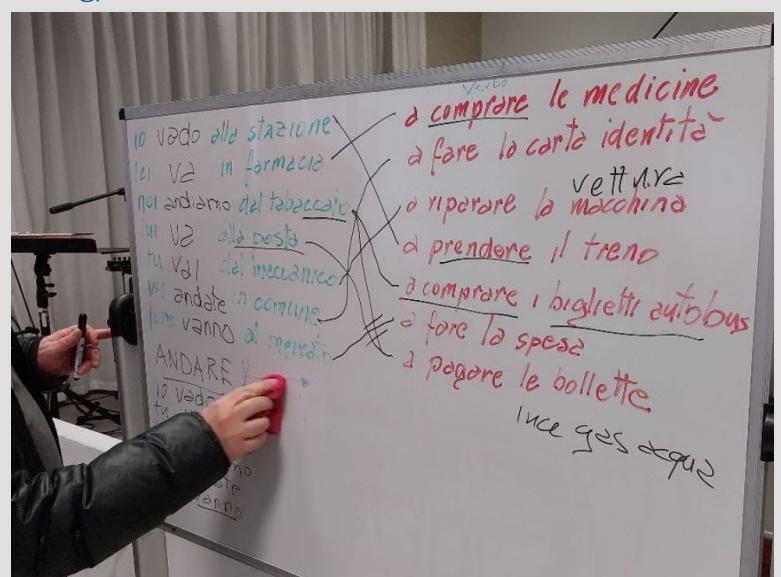
Grace and Aaron are using their unique individual gifts and skills to provide people access to God's life-transforming Word. Aaron serves refugee and asylum-seeking peoples who have come to Italy from across the African continent. He cultivates opportunities for Scripture engagement by connecting with those who do not have the complete Bible in their language, while exploring potential for Bible translation projects. Grace is an assistant to the Africa Area team, which works to support existing Bible translation projects in many ways, including consultant checking, desktop publishing and training workshops. This team's work accelerates the process of getting Scripture into the heart languages of Bibleless people groups.

In June of 2026, I (Brad) will have the opportunity to go visit the Ogburns in Milan and witness the work God is doing in and through them there! They are working tirelessly to translate God's Word into the languages of the people they are ministering to. What an incredible and important task God has bestowed upon them!

Would you like to learn more about the work of the Ogburns at Pioneer Bible Translators?

Check out this link! <https://pioneerbible.org/>

Want to learn more about how God has called us to minister to refugees, asylum seekers, and those internally displaced people groups? Check out this link! <https://iafr.org/resources>





# Serving Opportunities

## What is CareForOKC?

CareForOKC is our church's community ministry. It's located on the Ground Floor of FBCOKC and serves clients on Monday afternoons from 4-6pm. We have a food pantry which is like a tiny grocery store. Canned vegetables, meats, produce, milk, eggs, pastas, bread, desserts, and a lot more. Clients get to shop for groceries. We also have a clothes closet that has clothes for women, men, and children. If you've never been to CareForOKC, we'd love for you to come down and take a tour. We serve over 75 families every single week.

## Who does CareForOKC serve?

CareForOKC serves the working poor, those experiencing homelessness, immigrants and refugees new to Oklahoma City, folks who may have lost their jobs or are in another life transition, victims of domestic violence, the disabled, and many more.

## How does CareForOKC provide this service to the community?

We have an incredible lay team of volunteers that serve clients on Monday nights. Volunteers check in clients, assist them in the food pantry and clothes closet, and help people get their food/clothes loaded into their vehicles. In addition to Monday afternoons, we have drivers who pick up food donated from Wal-Mart and bring it to CareForOKC, we have other volunteers who come up during the week and restock the food pantry shelves or process clothes in the closet.

## Where Does the Food Come From at CareForOKC?

CareForOKC has partnerships with a local Wal-Mart where we pick up donated food twice a week and deliver it to the church. We also have a partnership with the Regional Foodbank of Oklahoma that enables us to buy bulk food items at a discounted cost. Occasionally, we will receive free items from the foodbank in addition to the goods we buy. In addition to Wal-Mart and the Regional Foodbank, we receive food and monetary donations from our FBCOKC church family and the community.

## How can I pray for and support this ministry?

You may noticed that your grocery bill is more expensive these days. Items that we purchase from the Regional Foodbank for our food pantry, which are often heavily discounted, are becoming more expensive or even not available. Due to the recent cuts to federal aid, our CareForOKC team is spending more money purchasing food to help keep our shelves stocked each week. Our reality is not unique. Community ministries in our area and across the nation are working to find creative ways to continue serving folks despite the effects of inflation and budget cuts. God has been so faithful in providing for our needs and we trust that God will continue to be faithful as we love our neighbors as ourselves. We can't express how thankful we are for your prayers, countless volunteer hours, food and clothes donations, financial gifts, and so much more. See the link below to learn more about giving to CareForOKC! You are testifying to the goodness of God in a world that sometimes feels hopeless. Jesus is our hope and we are His people.

<https://app.aplos.com/aws/give/FirstBaptistChurchOklahomaCity/GiveNow>

# Senior Adults & Discipleship



His master replied, *'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'* Matthew 25:23.

As I sit here on a Sunday afternoon, watching the New England Patriots and the Denver Broncos compete in the AFC Championship game, I find myself reflecting on the competitive spirit that has shaped my life. I don't have a strong preference for either team; instead, I appreciate the thrill of watching two talented squads battle it out to see who comes out on top.

This love for competition was ingrained in me from a young age, largely due to my father, a passionate sports enthusiast and coach throughout his teaching career. With only one television in our home, it always seemed to be tuned to a sporting event. The excitement of athletes digging deep within themselves to achieve their goals resonates with me on a personal level.

The game also brings back memories of my time in Katy, TX, where Mike and I raised our children. There, I had the privilege of working at a Texas 6A high school, where football was woven into the community's fabric. "Friday Night Lights" was more than just a saying; it captured the essence of the residents' unwavering support for the Katy High School Tigers. At the heart of this exciting culture was Mike Johnston, affectionately known as "Coach." He wasn't just a skilled football coach; he was a visionary dedicated to shaping the character of young men. He instilled in his players a mantra: "When excellence becomes tradition, greatness has no limits." This philosophy created a culture of high expectations and a relentless work ethic of preparing yourself so you could give your best.

However, my heart feels heavy as I reflect on Coach's recent passing. He was more than a coach to so many; he was a steadfast friend and a man of profound faith. Though far from perfect, he exemplified his beliefs both on and off the field, demonstrating a love for Jesus that inspired everyone around him. As I contemplate his legacy, I am reassured that he has found his place with Jesus.

Coach taught us that even the smallest talents could blossom into something remarkable, enhancing character and enriching faith. Throughout life, people come and go, each leaving unique impacts. Coach Johnston had a remarkable career and meant something special to countless individuals. Although I wasn't one of his players, I cherished his friendship and the unwavering trust in God that he demonstrated. As he faced the end of his life, grappling with pain and uncertainty, I prayed for his strength—to trust in his instincts and cling to a faith greater than himself. I have learned that true excellence isn't measured by victories but by the growth and development of our faith in Jesus that shapes us as individuals, creating a legacy that endures beyond our time on earth.

As I reflect on the qualities evident in Coach Johnston's life, I strive to embody his strong traits: hard work, tenacity, a love for people, and a profound belief in Jesus. I aspire to love and serve Jesus wholeheartedly during my time here. When my journey comes to an end, I hope others will remember me with the same reverence they held for Coach: *"Well done, good and faithful servant."* **-Toni**

# Connect



In my February article, I referred to a favorite scripture of mine from Matthew 25. This scripture tells the story of a master, who symbolizes Christ, giving his servants talents. These talents represent the resources, opportunities, and responsibilities that God entrusts to his believers. God, in His wisdom, provides exactly what we can handle and does not expect us to take on more than we are able. He desires us to be faithful with what He has given us. The important question we must ask ourselves is: Am I being faithful with what I have been given? Whether your talent is teaching, giving, encouraging, organizing, helping, or serving, God honors all actions that are born of faith. It is not about being perfect or waiting until you know everything; it is about being obedient with what you have been given. God can do so much with a surrendered life. He does not reward potential; rather, He rewards faithfulness. Faithfulness involves stepping out with what you have by serving, giving, sharing, discipling, building, helping, and growing.

about being obedient with what you have been given. God can do so much with a surrendered life. He does not reward potential; rather, He rewards faithfulness. Faithfulness involves stepping out with what you have by serving, giving, sharing, discipling, building, helping, and growing.

What will you do with what you have been given? You are meant to connect with others and utilize your gifts – this is ministry, and God can use each one of us.

As we reflected on John the Baptist in John 1, we see that John understood his mission and purpose: to point others to Jesus. Guess what? That is our mission and purpose as well. Sometimes, this is fulfilled by participating in a small group or joining a Bible study to foster community.

## **Small Groups: Community, Teaching, Accountability**

Experience true community, biblical teaching, and accountability in a small group at FBCOKC! We always have a place for you. Check out the group options below and email [tadams@fbcokc.org](mailto:tadams@fbcokc.org) if you have any questions or want help connecting with a group!

Most groups meet on Wednesdays at 5:30pm at FBCOKC or on Sunday nights.

Childcare and youth/children's activities are provided for groups that meet on Wednesday nights.

### **Bible Study Groups: Sundays at 9:15am**

#### **Kids@First**

Who: Babies – 5th Grade  
Where: 1st Floor Children's Area  
Contact: Ariel Koerner

#### **Youth**

Who: Grades 6-12  
Where: Youth Center (Ground Floor)  
Contact: Ariel Koerner

#### **Young Adult Group**

Who: 20's and early 30's (Singles and Couples)  
Where: 1<sup>st</sup> Floor across from Office  
Contact: Brad Stewart

#### **Middle Ground**

Who: 30's and 40's  
Where: Ground Floor  
Contact: Victoria Malony and Rick Johnson

#### **Higher Ground**

Who: 40's - 50's (Singles and Couples)  
Where: Parlor (Ground Floor)  
Contact: Brenda Cline

#### **The Collective**

Who: All ages; singles and couples  
Where: Coffee Shop (Ground Floor)  
Contact: Marie Davis, Joey Clifton, David Pennington

#### **Chapel Class**

Who: All ages; singles & couples  
Where: Library (First Floor)  
Contact: Toni Adams

#### **Good Shepherd Class**

Who: All ages  
Where: 1<sup>st</sup> Floor across from Office  
Contact: Alan Hicks

# Members



Dale Dodson - 2/1

Tanya Speer - 2/3

David Pennington - 2/5

Phyllis Prichard - 2/10

Grace Hawkins - 2/11

Matteo Hernandez - 2/11

Kate Millar - 2/14

JoAnne Smith - 2/15

Cathie Williams - 2/16

Grant Kinser - 2/19

Hannah Fogarty - 2/20

Valerie Bowen - 2/22

Jennie Clifton - 2/25

Jaime Rosado - 2/26

Sarah Stewart - 2/26

Natalee Unruh - 2/28

Peggy Elliott - 2/28

# Year At A Glance

## February

- February 8 "Souper" Bowl Feast
- February 15 Rick's Café
- February 18 Ash Wednesday
- February 19 "Rooted" 60+ Museum Tour
- February 20-22 Disciple Now Weekend
- February 27 Kid's Night Out

## March

- March 5 "Rooted" 60+ Luncheon
- March 8 Youth Hangout
- March 25 Quarterly Business Meeting
- March 29 Palm Sunday & Easter Egg Hunt

## April

- April 3 Good Friday
- April 5 Easter Sunday & Breakfast
- April 17 Youth Hangout
- April 24 Kid's Night Out

## May

- May 3 First Family Feast
- May 24 Pentecost Sunday
- May 31 End of Year Youth Bash

## June

- June 8-12 Kids Off Broadway
- June 14 Deacon Nomination Begins
- June 14-20 Youth Camp in Orange Beach
- June 24 Quarterly Business Meeting
- June 28 Summer Feast

## July

- July 4 Independence Day - Office Closed
- July 19-22 Passport Kids Camp

## August

- August 9 Start of Term Feast
- August 21 Kid's Night Out
- August 23 Youth Hangout LOTR

## September

- September 18-19 Elementary Retreat
- September 23 Quarterly Business Meeting
- September 27 Fall Feast
- September 27 Youth Hangout

## October

- October 9 Kid's Night Out
- October 24 Trunk or Treat
- October 30 Youth Hangout

## November

- November 6-8 Youth Retreat Anadarko
- November 15 Thanksgiving Feast
- November 20 Kid's Night Out

## December

- December 2 Annual Business Meeting
- December 13 Sounds of the Season
- December 20 Christmas Feast
- December 24 Taste of Christmas

# Love God | Love Other | Make Disciples

## Service Times

### Sunday Mornings

Bible Study at 9:15am  
Worship at 10:30am

### Wednesday Evenings

Small Groups and  
Children's Activities at 5:30pm  
Choir at 7:00pm

### **FBCOKC Ministers and Staff**

Sarah Stewart, Pastor  
Brad Stewart, Missions Minister  
Toni Adams, Minister for Senior Adults & Discipleship  
Ariel Koerner, Minister for Young Families  
Steven McConnell, Minister of Music  
Don Clothier, Pianist  
Justin Keiser, Facilities Manager  
Miranda Fryer, Administrative Assistant

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