



F B C  O K C  
EST. 1889

# First Connect

October 2025



# Letter from Sarah



Dear First Baptist Church Family,

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank God every day for you. Thank you for your love and grace that you extend to me, to one another, and to everyone who walks through our doors. We are growing in a lot of ways. Collectively, we are deepening our love for God and his holy word. There is a hunger in our church for biblical knowledge and understanding. There are people in our church who are feeling drawn into ministry. Some who feel God is asking them to prepare for the work that is coming down the road, they just don't know when. Others who are stepping out in faith and leading new small groups and serving in new ways. We are also growing in our capacity to be a safe place for people to come with their questions about Jesus. Every Sunday, we have people sitting in our pews who are seekers and trying to figure out if any of this is true. We have new believers and old believers experiencing renewal and rededication.

It is exciting to see God work in individual lives as well as in our church family. As I shared on Sunday, God has been stirring hearts and moving pieces into place for this next season of ministry. After months of prayer and discussion with the personnel committee, missions committee, finance committee, and deacon body, several things have fallen into place to help us live out our calling more fully as a church. Brad Stewart, who has served as our Minister for Discipleship for over 15 years, will now be moving into the role of Missions Pastor. He will continue his work with CareForOKC and begin working with our incredible missions committee. Toni Adams, our Minister for Senior Adults and Office Manager, will be shifting to add discipleship ministry to her responsibilities. This will allow her to live out her calling more fully and lean into her gifts of helping people grow in their faith. For Toni and Brad to spend more of their time in ministry and not administrative work, we have added 12 hours to our incredibly talented Administrative Assistant, Miranda Fryer. This came as a tremendous blessing to her and a gift to the rest of the staff and church.

They are not the only ones feeling called by God right now. The question isn't whether God is calling you. The question is whether you are listening and willing to say yes. Ministry is the responsibility of every single follower of Christ. The need is too great for there to be any passive, sidelined Christians. We need people who are taking their faith seriously and listening to the leading of the Spirit. We need every follower of Christ to live out our calling every day in every place where you find yourself.

Being a disciple is about more than a one-time decision to accept Jesus as your Lord. It's about every day after that, choosing to walk with God and learn to listen well to his leading. It's about putting into practice the teachings of Jesus and helping others find their way toward a more holy life, walking with Christ. Maybe it's the mundane, steady pursuit of prayer and scripture and discussion that will change the world. Maybe it is in those quiet moments that people will come to reject the things in this life that are nothing but empty promises and vain hopes of power and security. Maybe that's how we further the kingdom of God, one faithful Sunday at a time.

Maybe, just like people grow one step at a time in our journey of faith, maybe churches do too. Maybe we are all moving in closer and striving to follow more faithfully where God is leading. Church family, keep going. Keep growing. Keep loving. Keep listening. God is working.

# Upcoming Events

## **Churchwide Women's Art Project, October 11 from 10am-12pm in the coffee shop**

Join us to create an angel on canvas with tissue paper for the holiday season! Come for fellowship and fun. Start collecting bright-colored tissue paper now!

## **Rick's Cafe - Sunday, October 12 at 6:00pm**

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 Cafe" in the Parlor on Sunday, October 12 at 6:00pm. Come with your questions for Rick as we learn and grow together in faith! Childcare available.

## **Deacons Meeting, October 28 at 6pm in dining hall**

## **FBCOKC Thanksgiving Feast, November 16 after service in the dining hall**

Menu, all congregants?

## **Bright Music, November 18 at 7:30pm in the sanctuary**

Join us as Bright Music performs their program entitled "Hungary Rhapsody"  
Tickets are \$20 each (students and active-duty military free with ID)

### *IT'S ALMOST TIME FOR OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD SHOEBOX MISSIONS PROJECT OCTOBER 19 - NOVEMBER 16*

- Stop by the display table in the **Commons** or **Children's Hallway** to pick up a shoebox, informational brochure, and free "starter item".
- Begin now to pray for the child who will receive your shoebox gift. It may be the first gift they have ever received, and the first time they have ever heard about Jesus.
- Decide if your shoebox gift will go to a boy or girl, and which age group. Fill more than one shoebox if you want.
- This is a perfect activity for families to teach young children about missions and sharing the story of Jesus with other children around the world.
- You don't have to have young children to fill a shoebox. Anyone of any age will love to participate in this project.
- Begin shopping now for new, high-quality items to fill your shoebox: toys, school supplies, clothing items, personal care items.
- Still have questions? Contact Mary Ray or other members of the Missions Committee.
- **THANK YOU** for participating in this project to share the love of Jesus with children around the world.





# Kids and Youth



As we approach October, my mind naturally goes towards spooky things. Getting scared is something that some people find thrilling, but others dread. Fear is something we all have. When I think of fear, I think of spiders, usually. Those things are scary! Give God your fear instead. God can handle those fears way better than we can. So, this Halloween season, don't be scared about things in this world. God is SO much bigger than all of that. In the wise words of VeggieTales:

God is bigger than the boogie man  
He's bigger than Godzilla, or the monsters on TV  
Oh, God is bigger than the boogie man  
And He's watching out for you and me

## **Trunk-or-Treat, October 25**

We will have Trunk-or-Treat from 3-5pm on Saturday, October 25<sup>th</sup>. This is linking up with the Midtown Walkabout, so it will be a wonderful time to explore the community around our church as well. If you are interested in doing a trunk, the sign-up sheet will be in the Commons starting September 28<sup>th</sup>.

Also, look for the monster in the commons for candy/prize donations.

## **Youth Retreat, November 14-16**

Save the date for the youth fall retreat! We will be learning why everyone needs grace, the cost of grace, and how to extend grace to others. This is a weekend long retreat. The cost is \$35, which covers meals and a shirt! Be looking for the signup sheet on the youth bulletin board! UPDATE: We had a generous donor pay for the youth to be able to go, so it is free for the youth!

## **Meet the 3-5-year-old Teachers, Judson and Kathleen Kinkade**

*Why do you love working with kids in the ministry?*

*Judson:* Children are endlessly entertaining and sometimes exhausting. But whenever I think about stopping I think these kids could be future church leaders, and I need to do my part to teach them God's love and compassion.



*Kathleen:* Tiny humans are fun, and I love watching them learn about God's love for every single one of them. I've taught children in church as long as I can remember – starting when I was a child myself. I feel that it is vital for them to know that they have a home in God. I love helping them learn that every thought, worry, joy, challenge, triumph they have is important to God, and they are never alone, because He hears us even when we are silent. I learn a lot about having fun and being silly from them too. Sometimes you just gotta hop like a penguin to make life better.

# Exciting Ministry Update

Frederick Buechner, in his book *Wishful Thinking*, says this about God's calling upon our lives: "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." I keep thinking about this quote as I, by God's grace, begin a new chapter of ministry at FBCOKC as Minister for Missions. What does it look for us, as a church family, to find the places where our deep joy and the world's deep hunger meet? Maybe they meet in the halls of Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School where you spend time tutoring a precious child or supporting an overwhelmed teacher. Maybe they meet in the home of "Hope is Alive" residents where you cook dinner for a group of men or women who are in recovery from addiction. Maybe your deep joy and the world's deep hunger meet in the waiting room of CareForOKC where you pray with a client or help them shop for groceries. Maybe they meet in the front yard of a dilapidated house you go to repair in the name of Jesus. Maybe they meet in the eyes of an immigrant at the border who receives a hat from you to shield them from the sun as they work to provide for their family. Maybe your deep joy and the world's deep hunger meet in a place in our neighborhood, our city, our state, or our world that is waiting to be discovered. We don't have to wait for the next "mission trip" to discover this place. It's here, right now, right in front of us. It's our very lives. God is calling all of us to partner with Him in putting the world back together one piece at a time. One place at a time. One life at a time. FBCOKC, let's go have some fun being the presence of Jesus as we minister in word and deed as we pray "Thy kingdom come and Thy will be done on Earth as it is in heaven." Amen. **-Brad**

Little did I know some nine years ago, when I stepped into this church community, that God would change my life forever. When I look back twenty years ago, I now see how God was calling me and planting in my heart a desire to serve Him in the local church. Back in my former church in Katy, I believe it all started. I facilitated and led women's bible studies at church and found it to be fulfilling but did not understand what that feeling was. Fast forward to FBCOKC, I walked into a place that acknowledged women in ministry and truly didn't know that God had been preparing me for ministry. I am honored and find it a privilege to serve this church. I love this church, and my new role as Discipleship minister (I am not going to lie) scares me a little, but also, in the same breath, excites me. Since I have been here, God has surprised me time and time again with new challenges. I intend to trust Him in the days ahead as I lead in this place. Thank you for believing in me, and as I recall those twenty years ago, I truly believe that God was preparing me "for such a time as this". **-Toni**

I was born and raised in McAlester, and now live in NW OKC with my husband Jon and our three pets -Murphy, Moose and Snowpea. Jon and I are high school sweethearts and are celebrating our 7-year wedding anniversary on October 13, and my birthday on October 15! We are hoping for good weather during our upcoming camping trip to celebrate. For hobbies I enjoy creating unique items through macrame, reading, singing, cooking/baking, and spending time with my little family. My absolute favorite color is green (any shade will do) and my favorite movie is the Grand Budapest Hotel by Wes Anderson.

I happened across FBCOKC while in the midst of changing careers, and I truly believe that God put this church in my path when I needed it the most. It has been a blessing that I'm continually grateful for, and I look forward to what the future has in store! If I haven't gotten to meet you yet, please stop by and say hi. **-Miranda**





# Senior Adults & Discipleship



Meet my small group that meets on Wednesday mornings. We have an all-ladies group that meets on Wednesdays at 10:30 am in the library. This group is co-led by Pam Williams & I. If you are looking for a ladies' group to join, please consider this wonderful group of ladies. We have fellowships from time to time, and I wanted to share pics of a few members of this group at one of our outings. We went to the Centennial Land Run Sculpture, followed by a boat ride on the Oklahoma River. Also, this group plans on doing a service project by helping with the preparation of hot dogs for the FBCOKC Trunk or Treat. Someone said we are preparing 1000 hot dogs for the community!



My second group meets on Wednesday nights, and this is a co-ed group of wonderful people. This group takes care of each other behind the scenes in various ways, as well as being committed to the church. We meet on the first and third Wednesdays of the month.

We have other wonderful small groups meeting on Wednesdays or Sundays. Please consider joining a small group as you learn to grow, serve, and give at FBCOKC.

## **“Rooted” 60+ Luncheon Coming**

Holly Murphy will be our entertainment at our next “Rooted” 60+ luncheon. We will come together at 11:30 am, October 30, and enjoy a wonderful menu of catfish, hushpuppies, green beans, cobbler, and ice cream. After we are served, Holly will bring us a concert made up of musical hits from the 40’s through the 60’s. So, plan now to come to this event just for you. Cost is \$10.00 at the door for the meal and entertainment. You may sign up in the commons for this event or email [Tadams@fbcokc.org](mailto:Tadams@fbcokc.org)





# Missions

## **Loving Our Neighbors at the Border**

FBCOKC is an encourager church for Elket Rodriguez who is the Global Migration Advocate for CBF Global Missions. His mission is to welcome, protect, and empower migrants at the U.S. – Mexico border. A lot of Elket's mission work takes place near Harlingen, TX in a border communities called the Colonias (on US side of the border).

Elket reached out to Joey Clifton and our missions team with a need for hygiene kits and hats for the migrants he serves. We asked our church family to donate items to complete these kits and you responded! Not only did you donate items, you worked together to assemble the kits and prepare them to be delivered! Well done, FBCOKC!

Our mission team will be hand-delivering the kits in October and will get a chance to see the incredible work Elket and others are doing at the border. We will be packing up fresh fruits and other produce and distributing it to families in the Colonias. We will also be visiting a different Colonias community where we will be repairing the house of an elderly couple.

Please pray for our mission team as they prepare to serve. Our team will leave Tuesday, October 21 and return Sunday, October 26.

## **What are the Colonias?**

The Colonias is a community along the U.S.-Mexico border that typically was created with the illegal subdividing of property without basic infrastructure. The homes in a colonia may lack running water and sewer systems. Often, colonias don't have paved streets and there's no drainage. When there is rain, flooding is a problem. There are no basic services like garbage pick-up. Accessing emergency services is a challenge because there are no official street addresses.

An estimated 500,000 people live in thousands of colonias along the Texas-Mexico border. Largely established between the 1950s and 1980s, state laws have been passed to try to prevent new colonias from sprouting up. But because of today's affordable housing crisis, colonias are seeing a comeback. Scan the QR code or click the link to learn more about the Colonias. Let us pray for the Colonias communities and continue supporting the work of Elket and others who are being the hands and feet of Jesus to our neighbors.

<https://pulitzercenter.org/stories/texas-matters-struggles-life-border-colonia>



# Serving Opportunities



## LOVING OUR NEIGHBORS IN OUR COMMUNITY

Did you know...?

Did you know that CareForOKC serves up to 75 family units as clients every single week with food and clothes? Did you know that we have an incredible team of volunteers who embody the presence of Christ by serving those experiencing homelessness, refugees, the working poor, immigrants, those navigating life transitions after a tragedy, women escaping domestic abuse, the disabled, and folks recovering from addiction? Did you know that CareForOKC have a growing list of community partners like Wal-Mart, the Regional Foodbank, The Homeless Alliance, and others who want to be a part of what God is doing through this community ministry? Did you know that new volunteers (individuals and businesses) not connected to FBCOKC are coming every week to work alongside us? Long story short: Get excited because amazing things are happening at CareForOKC! The Kingdom of God is on full display every Monday from 4:00 – 6:00pm when clients are served, early Monday mornings when volunteers deliver and unload food and restock the shelves. During the week when friends come to hang clothes in the clothes closet or pack resource bags in the food pantry. Praise be to God for the work He is doing in and through this ministry.

Here's how you can 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>

In November, we will begin our "Share the Warmth" coat and blanket drive so start getting excited getting your donations ready!!!!



# Community

## Finding Hope Support Group

Finding Hope is a support group for loved ones of addicts and alcoholics. When you start listening to people's stories, you discover that addiction is not an isolated issue with just a handful of families. It affects us all in some form or fashion. Meetings take place every 2nd and 4th Thursday every month at 6:00pm in the Coffee Shop of FBCOKC. Please use the SOUTH entrance under the blue canopy and follow the signs to the Coffee Shop. This support group is open to ANYONE in our community, not just the FBCOKC church family. We'd be honored to have visitors or guests!

**FINDING  
HOPE**  
A HOPE IS ALIVE MINISTRY

Email [bradstewart@fbcokc.org](mailto:bradstewart@fbcokc.org) if you'd like to connect with our group or have questions. Click the link below to learn more about Finding Hope support groups!

<https://hopeisalive.net/what-we-do/finding-hope/>

**We asked and you gave** for the July school supply drive! We received this wonderful thank you card from the teachers of Martin Luther King Elementary who are very appreciative of everything they received.



# Connect

## **Small Groups – A Long Obedience in the Same Direction**

Eugene Peterson describes Christian discipleship as “a long obedience in the same direction”. He wrote an incredible book with that exact title you should read! His point was this: following Jesus is not about the shortcuts of instant gratification or quests for quick fixes. It’s a long, slow, and steady walk in the same direction. Towards Jesus. Spiritual growth does not happen overnight. It takes showing up day after day committing yourself to the habits of Jesus once again.

In the context of our small groups at FBCOKC, I’ve been thinking about this phrase and how it applies. Joining a small group is opening yourself up to the long, steady, slow work of God in a group of people and continuing to put one foot in front of the other. Loving people and growing with them can be scary. It can be frustrating at times. You open yourself up to risk because love is always a risk. But Peterson, in the book, says this: *“And yet I decide, every day, to set aside what I can do best and attempt what I do very clumsily--open myself to the frustrations and failures of loving, daring to believe that failing in love is better than succeeding in pride.”*

We are all, very clumsily at times, learning to love each other, grow together, and walk towards Jesus together. There’s nothing flashy or easy about it. But it’s holy and good and worth the risk. Every week, I hear new stories from our small group leaders about the slow, steady, and holy work taking place in our groups. This work takes time, patience, perseverance, grit, courage, and a whole lot of grace. But I wouldn’t have it any other way! Luke 9:23 calls out to us: “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” Come join a small group and join us on the journey!

### **Adams Group – Women’s Group**

**Age:** All ages (*women only*)

**Location:** Library of FBCOKC

**Time:** Wednesdays at 10:00am (*bi-weekly*)

**Contact:** Toni Adams

### **Adams Group**

**Age:** All ages

**Location:** Library of FBCOKC

**Time:** Wednesdays at 5:30pm

**Contact:** Toni Adams

### **Middle Ground**

**Age:** 30’s – 40’s

**Location:** Pastor’s Office of FBCOKC

**Time:** Wednesdays at 5:30pm

**Contact:** Sarah Stewart

### **Higher Ground**

**Age:** 40’s – 50’s

**Location:** Home of Nich & Randa Smith

**Time:** Sundays at 6:00pm

**Contact:** Randa Smith

### **Young Adults**

**Age:** 20’s – Mid 30’s

**Location:** Conference Room of FBCOKC

**Time:** Wednesdays at 5:30pm

**Contact:** Christi McConnell

### **Young Adults #2**

**Age:** 20’s – Mid 30’s

**Location:** Home of Lucas/Hayley Goodspeed

**Time:** Sundays at 6:00

**Contact:** Lucas Goodspeed

### **Stewart Group**

**Age:** All ages

**Location:** Parlor of FBCOKC

**Time:** Wednesdays at 5:30pm

**Contact:** Brad Stewart

### **Pennington/Sigler Group**

**Age:** All ages

**Location:** Home of David/Teri Pennington

**Time:** Sundays at 6:00pm

**Contact:** Scott Sigler



# Music

On October 5 we enjoyed the FBCOKC Fall Follies theatrical revue with our choir, ensemble, and several solo acts performing! It was a fun evening of music with many memorable moments.



You are invited to check out our Sanctuary Choir! We rehearse Wednesday nights from 7pm-8pm.

No audition necessary and all are welcome to come and sing praise with us.

Stay tuned for upcoming information about Christmas programs. You won't want to miss it!





# Building Updates

There is something sacred about this beautiful church building. Early on Sunday mornings, long before the first sound of giggling children fills our halls, before faithful Bible Study teachers arrive to welcome their classes, before the lights have been turned on, the sun shines through the east-facing stained glass windows in the sanctuary, and it is enough to stop you in your tracks. The golden glow illuminates the room filled with beautiful wooden pews that have seen generation after generation come to faith in our good God. The faces have changed, the clothing styles cycle through and come back around, but the heart of this place has stayed the same. We are a family of faith striving to be faithful to who God has called us to be in this place. This is our time.

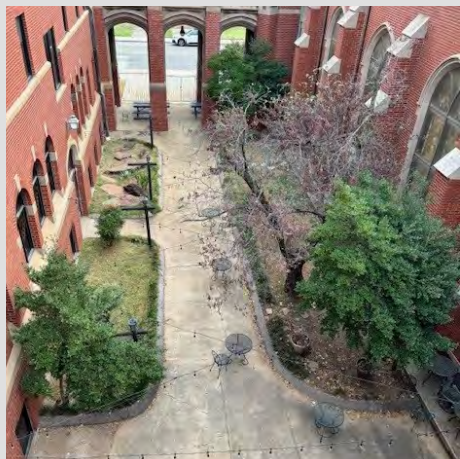
Over the past five years, the Academy of Classical Christian Studies has invested over 3 million dollars in building renovations. What a tremendous blessing! We have also invested in our building and our property to make it a welcoming place for kingdom-building purposes. One area at a time, we have been updating and improving this place. Because we are caring well for our building, we can use it more and more. I want to share with you a few of the things happening in our building.

Our South parking lot has completed construction and is now functional. This is part of the Academy renovations. We now have better lighting, new landscaping, and a brand new parking lot. What a blessing.

Our Building and Grounds committee has been hard at work designing and planning to have a new sign made for our Robinson Street entrance. We have received two gifts from generous church members to help us cover nearly the whole cost of the sign, and we have made the first payment to our vendor so they can get started!

Beginning this month, the Academy will start work on replacing the 3rd floor roof on the Hobbs building. When that work is complete, they will begin renovating the third floor to have it ready for the 2026/2027 school year with new classrooms and a library meeting space. We plan to host an open house for the church when renovations are complete!

On October 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> we will welcome the Painters, Prophets, and Poets Conference once more, with world-renowned authors, painters, and poets coming to speak. We are a community center. It is amazing how this large, beautiful building is now being used to help us do ministry by supporting our budget. God took what could have been a burden and turned it into a blessing.



The courtyard is about to be updated by a young Academy student for his Eagle Scout project. He has been working with a horticulturalist as well as a wholesale local nursery to provide the materials. He has been raising the funds, recruiting volunteers, working with our Building and Grounds Committee, and leading the effort to update the space. We are now seeking volunteers who want to pitch in as we see this project come to fruition! Help is needed for planting and cleanup of flower beds. If interested, please reach out to Justin to get your name on the volunteer list, and to receive the date and time details once they are set.





# Birthdays



Dean Rankin - 10/7

Darla Lankford - 10/8

Lucy Kinser - 10/9

Linda Fitch - 10/10

Stefani Lankford - 10/12

J.D. Wallace - 10/12

Rosemary Rogers - 10/13

Stuart Lankford - 10/14

Austin Davis - 10/14

Miranda Fryer - 10/15

Bill Ashford "100" - 10/16

Herb Lang - 10/16

Kathleen Kinkade - 10/17

Alexandra Malony - 10/20

Abby Pena - 10/20

Rosie Wallace - 10/23

Sheri Cook - 10/24

Doris Lang - 10/25

Chad Wallace - 10/28

Judy Watts - 10/30

Brad Stewart - 10/30

C.J. Capraro - 10/31

David Curtiss - 10/31

## **Celebrate Bill Ashford's 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday!**

Celebrate Bill Ashford's birthday, October 16, by sending him a birthday card.

His address is 6429 N. Harvard, OKC, OK 73132. Let's fill his mailbox with well-wishes. Thank you!

We will have a celebration for Bill on November 9 in the Parlor! More information coming soon



# Recent Events



January



February



March



April



May



June



July



August



September



# Year at a Glance

## **October**

October 11 Churchwide Women's Art Project  
October 12 Rick's Cafe  
October 25 Trunk or Treat  
October 28 Deacon's Meeting  
October 30 "Rooted" Luncheon

## **November**

November 14-16 Youth Fall Retreat  
November 18 Bright Music Chamber Ensemble  
November 16 Building Wide Gratitude Feast  
November 23 Decorating for Christmas  
November 30 First Sunday of Advent

## **December**

December 3 Annual Business Meeting  
December 7 Youth Christmas Party  
December 12 Elementary Christmas Party  
December 13 Littles Christmas Party  
December 14 Sounds of the Season  
December 21 Christmas Feast  
December 24 Christmas Eve Service

## **January**

January 18 Committee Kickoff

**Please note:** Activities are subject to change

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, Minister for Discipleship

Toni Adams, Minister for Senior Adults

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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