

## Letter from Sarah



Church family, I pray for you every day. You are incredible, church! You each have your own struggles and trials that you face every day, but your faith remains relentless and strong. You inspire me. I know a lot of you have mountains you need moved right now. Me too. So together, we will trust in God's goodness to be with us no matter what. Often during worship, as the choir leads us so beautifully, I think about the testimonies that are represented up there and how God has worked in each of your lives. Most Sunday mornings, at some point during the service, I will stop singing for a moment and just listen as the church leans in closer to God as we sing of his goodness and faithfulness.

We are growing, you and I. I can see it, and I think you can feel it (if you are paying attention). I don't mean growing numerically, though that is happening. I mean that God is working in each of us, shaping who we are and how we see the world. God is working in us in a new way that I have not experienced before. I come on Sunday mornings, not just hoping, but knowing deep down that God will meet us as we gather and will work among us. It is holy. Have you sensed it? Have you felt the movement of the Spirit as we worship? Have you noticed people praying together after worship? I have. Have you noticed the new faces of people joining us every week who want to meet Jesus? God is so good.

This year as we have studied the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts, I have been blown away by the lessons God is teaching me. Studying the stories in Acts has shaped the way I see the church and what it means to be family. It means praying for each other, supporting each other, growing and learning together, and challenging each other to be better. Being family means focusing on our mission together and keeping Jesus always before us. Sometimes, being family means working through problems together and creatively coming up with solutions together. It also means holding each other up when life falls apart.

During our worship service on August 24<sup>th</sup> we studied the story in Acts 12. It is the story of James's death and Peter's deliverance. It's a hard passage. Why does God rescue one and not the other? Why do some people get their miracle and others don't? I don't know. But I know that his goodness and power and love are all still true even when the miracle doesn't happen because sometimes it doesn't. I know that it doesn't mean God isn't there or that he is too small to do anything or too removed to care. He is our God either way. We pray anyway. We pray believing God can and will rescue us, but we trust him either way.

Friends, I am so honored that so many of you shared with me how I can pray for you. I want you to know I am praying with you each day. Praying for miracles and mercies. Praying for wisdom and courage. Praying for growth and healing. Frederick Buechner wrote this, "Even if the miracle doesn't come, keep on beating the path to God's door, because the one thing you can be sure of is that down that path you beat with even your most half-cocked and halting prayers, the God you call upon will finally come, and even if he doesn't bring you the answer you want, he will bring you himself. And maybe at the secret heart of all our prayers that is what we are really praying for." So keep praying friends. Keep looking to the God who saves us. Join with me in praying for the church and all the many needs sitting in our pews each week. Pray for God to do what only God can do. And pay attention to how he is already moving in and among us. Every day I thank God for you. Blessings to each one of you as you shine your light in every corner of the world. God is with you. You will not fail. ~Sarah



# Upcoming Events

#### Rick's Cafe - Sunday, Sept. 14 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, Sept. 14 at 6:00pm. Come with your questions for Rick as we learn and grow together in faith! Childcare available.



Join us in the dining hall

#### OKC Comets Baseball Game, September 14

Join us for a fun afternoon at the OKC Comet's last game of the season! Let Ariel know if you want to join in this fun family event. Tickets are \$20 each. Invite your friends and family to join us.

#### Elementary Kids Retreat, September 19 - 20

Parents! Save the date for our third annual Elementary Kids Retreat! The retreat begins Friday night at 6 pm in the Youth Center and ends on Saturday at noon. We will laugh, play games, eat delicious food, grow in God's grace, watch movies, and sleep (hopefully!). We will be learning "How God puts the AWE in awesome!" We will strive to gain a deeper understanding of who God is in each of our lives and see what the Bible says about God's power and holiness. Sign-up at the check-in desk!

#### **Evensong Service, September 21**

Join us at 6pm in the Sanctuary for Evensong. Our lives can be so busy, so take a moment to settle yourself before the start of a busy week. It's an opportunity to let serene music and profound words wash over you, providing a moment of peace and spiritual reflection.

#### First Family Feast, September 28

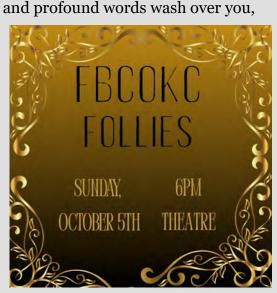
Join us after worship for our feast! This is a time to gather in fellowship with one another. The menu will be roast beef, mashed potatoes, and veggies. We hope you are able to join us in spending time as the community of God.

#### FBCOKC Follies, October 5

Join us at 6pm for a night of family entertainment! Come for a light-hearted night of laughs.

"The world's a stage, and everything else is vaudeville."

-Alan Moore



BCOOKC

Sept. 14 - 6:00pm

FBCOKC PARLOR



## Kids and Youth



We have some exciting things happening in the kid's and youth ministries! We are updating the check-in system in our kids' area. This way we know all those who walk through our doors and make sure they get to the correct classrooms. Thank you for being patient during this time of transition! We also set a goal for all of the kids and youth ministry workers to complete sexual abuse prevention training. This was necessary training for the safety of all of those to whom we minister. Our top priority is the safety of our kids and youth. I can say that all of the workers, volunteers, and ministers have completed the training. I am so thankful to all of the people that make those ministries run smoothly. I could not do this work without their help.



#### 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.

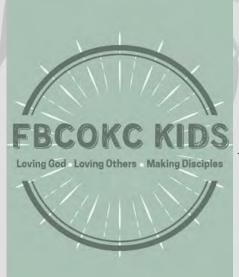
If you are interested in doing a trunk, the signup sheet will be in the Commons starting September 21st.

#### 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!

# Kids and Youth

I recently turned in an application for a grant through Baptist Women in Ministry. This was a wellness grant that is to be used for an activity of your choosing. The whole purpose of the grant is to do something that will bring wellness to you, your body, and your soul. I am thankful for being one of the recipients of this grant! When I wrote to BWIM regarding the grant, I wasn't sure what I wanted to do with it, but I knew I wanted to do a personal retreat. Since receiving the grant, I have found a place in here Oklahoma to go spend a weekend in God's creation. The first weekend of September, I am going to a retreat center, by myself, and I will make this a "no phone" experience. I plan on spending the weekend in rest and renewal to see what God has planned for me and the ministries that I work with. This is a chance to get closer to God and rest in him. I am super excited for this weekend and thankful for BWIM for honoring me with this opportunity.



We have created some new shirts for the kids and youth ministries! We are doing a pre-order for these shirts, and they will be purchased at the first of the year. If you are interested in purchasing a shirt, please use the link below. You can see the pictures of the shirts. Those will be the colors, and they range from size Youth S to Adult 3XL. If you have any questions, please let Ariel know. They will be \$10 a shirt.







#### **Meet the Teacher:**

Donna Gatewood, Elementary Sunday School

"I love working with our kids in K-5th grade Sunday School. They are starting on this journey of learning and asking questions about their faith, the Bible or why do you think someone in the Bible did what they did. I learn things every time they ask questions! I enjoy being there to provide a safe place for them as they build their foundation in Jesus. Craft time is always fun too. It's a rewarding place to serve in our church. I thoroughly enjoy our kids and co-teachers Cathie Williams and Ryan Bowen."

## Senior Adults

Expect the unexpected as God is at work, and trust in his plan for your life. When you read and study God's word, you see God showing up in unexpected ways, from a burning bush to a still small whisper, to Jesus walking right beside men who were talking about him. God comes to us in ways we can't even dream or imagine.



That is the kind of God we serve. A God that will not be put in a box, but a God who acts at just the right time, in just the right way for His glory. God's presence is experienced through people, places, situations, and a remembering of what he has done in the past.

Our pastor is teaching from the book of Acts, and I have been amazed to learn things I have read before and never thought about.

For instance, Peter, in chapter 12. When Peter went to sleep bound by chains and guards, did he know that his Lord would deliver him? After all, he walked with Jesus for three years and saw Jesus perform many miraculous things, and experienced Jesus sleeping through a storm on a boat being tossed about. Peter could fall asleep because God is good and His purpose will be made known no matter what. Peter had grown up from those days of living in shame because his faith was not firm. I believe he didn't worry about some inner weakness that would cause him to turn from God once again. He slept with assurance in a God who was in control, and he had let go of his own way.

An angel woke up Peter with chains falling off. At first, Peter thought he was seeing a vision. Could freedom be that easy? After passing the guards and walking down the street, he realized that he wasn't dreaming. He was free. God help us to know that we are free because you made a way through Jesus. We don't have to be bound by chains. Peter experienced, once again, freedom from God, who had a purpose for Peter. He went to tell his friends what had happened. When the Lord answers your prayers, be sure to give testimony about it so that others are encouraged and God receives the glory he deserves.

Do we truly believe that God will answer us when we pray, and believe that God "can do above and beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us" (Ephesians 3:20).

I sure want to!



The Senior Adults had a fun time at Bingo/Snack Day!
We will plan another Bingo Day in the fall so watch for the date.







A few of the Senior Adults went to El Reno to celebrate Jim Hall's 90th birthday. He was very happy to see us. Of course, Earlene got a big hug from us also.



## Missions

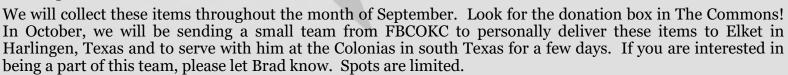
#### **Loving Our Neighbors at The Border**

**Loving Our Neighbors** 

We need your help! FBCOKC is an encourager church for Elket Rodriguez. In 2020, Elket joined the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and Fellowship Southwest as an Immigrant and Refugee Advocate and Missions Specialist. As an encourager church, we've committed to pray for Elket and support him as he serves communities and migrants in the expansive U.S. – Mexico border region, spanning four U.S. states and six Mexican states. His ministry right now is focused on The Colonias communities in south Texas.

Elket has been communicating with our Missions Team about specific needs of the immigrant communities he serves. They are desperately in need of hygiene kits and hats that can provide migrants protection from the sun. Wings, a local organization that serves adults with developmental disabilities, generously provides hygiene kits to churches and organizations across Oklaincluding our very own CareForOKC community minishoma try. Wings has agreed to provide us with hygiene kits for this mission project! Below is a list of items you can donate to help us complete the kits:

- Wet wipes (travel size)
- Fingernail clippers
- Hand sanitizer (2 FL OZ size)
- Hats that provide protection from the sun (new or "like new" hats only please)
- You can also donate money to the Missions Budget and we will purchase the items



Please pray for Elket Rodriguez as he seeks to be the presence of Jesus to the border communities. Donate items (see list above) or make a financial gift to the Missions offering of FBCOKC to enable us to support this important mission!



#### **Update from Tim Tillinghast**

If you haven't got the chance to meet Tim (who is a member of FBCOKC) and hear his story, you are missing out! Tim works for Wycliffe Bible Translators and SIL Global and he is one of the missionaries we support through our FBCOKC Missions Budget. Tim spent many years serving abroad in Mali (West Africa) and Germany and is now working from home in Oklahoma City! Recently, Tim agreed to take on a role in Native American Language Revitalization for SIL Americas based right here in his home state of Oklahoma. Please click on the link below to read all about the incredible work Tim has done and his new role in Native American Language Revitalization!

Tillinghast Times: Vision 2025, Native American Language work



## **Serving Opportunities**

#### **CareForOKC - Community Ministry of FBCOKC**

CareForOKC is a community ministry of FBCOKC providing food and clothes to the homeless, working poor, disabled, refugees, those in life transitions, and more. Our food pantry and clothes closet serves clients on Mondays from 4:00-6:00pm.

We would be honored to have you come serve with us! Click on the link below to learn more information and sign up to volunteer!

#### CareForOKC Sign-up

If you're interested in donating food or clothes, here are our current needs!

Current Food Needs: canned chicken, canned vegetables, canned ravioli (pull-top)

Current Clothing Needs: men's and women's underwear (all sizes), men's boxer briefs, and socks (all sizes)



<u>Large Delivery, September 8</u> - Please join us at 9am to unload a large delivery of food products

Clothing Room Workday, September 87, from 10am, the University and hang denoted elethic

<u>Clothing Room Workday, September 27 from 10am-1pm</u> - Help unbox and hang donated clothing

#### **Greeting Team Ministry**

Help us greet visitors, special guests, and our church family at FBCOKC! We have a small, growing, amazing congregation with a gigantic building so we need your help! Scan the QR code to sign up as a Sunday morning greeter. Please note: you will see sign-up options for two time slots. (9:00am - 10:00am and 10:00am - 10:45am) Please make sure you are signing up for your preferred time slot. If you are willing to greet for multiple time slots, that's wonderful! Just be sure to sign up for each time slot.





#### **Children's Ministry Volunteers**

Our children's ministry is BOOMING! Did you know we have 10 in the nursery and in the toddler room? We have even more in the upper grades! I am beyond excited to see the way our children's ministry to growing, but with growth comes the need for volunteers. Maybe working with infants frightens you...guess what? We have elementary aged kids who would love to have you hang out with them! We have many opportunities to help in the children's ministry. On Sundays we have Bible Studies and GIGGLES (During worship). We also meet on Wednesday nights and have several events during the year. Right now we are searching for Bible Study teachers and substitute teachers. Sometimes life happens and we need to call in a sub, we want to make sure that person is up to date on background checks and is ready to fill in when needed. Our children's and youth ministries are the heart of our church. Let's help these kids grow in their love for God together. If you are interested, please contact Ariel at <a href="mailto:akoerner@fbcokc.org">akoerner@fbcokc.org</a>

#### **Missions Opportunity**

It's time to start getting excited about Operation Christmas Child shoe boxes! More info coming soon.



# Community

#### Run For Hope-OKC: Saturday, September 6

This year will mark our 2nd annual "Run For Hope" (formerly known as "Sobriety Sprint"), when we remember, honor, and celebrate those who lost their lives to addiction. This year's event is hosted by our Finding Hope and Hope After Loss Support Groups. We currently have over 800 members across the United States who attend these free support groups to seek hope and healing as they navigate loving someone with addiction, as well as find strength through their grief of losing a loved one. This year's run will be family focused with our first one-mile walk/run, inflatables, food trucks, and more. This will be an event you and your family will not want to miss! All proceeds from this year's "Run For Hope" will go to funding our growing Finding Hope and Hope After Loss Support Groups, allowing more families to find healing and hope.

Run for Hope - OKC

#### **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 Cof-

fee 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!



Email bradstewart@fbcokc.org if you'd like to connect with our group or have A HOPE IS ALIVE MINISTRY questions. Click the link below to learn more about Finding Hope support groups! <a href="https://hopeisalive.net/what-we-do/finding-hope/">https://hopeisalive.net/what-we-do/finding-hope/</a>



#### **Unite 2025 City Night of Worship**

Join the FBCOKC ministry team, and grab your tickets now for this city-wide night of worship!

September 28, 5:30pm-8:00pm

Chickasaw Bricktown Ballpark

- Lower Level Admission \$5/person
- On Field Standing Room \$25/person
- College students attend for free with student ID

Website: **CNOW** 

Ticket Link: Unite OKC 2025



## Connect

Bible Study Groups: Sundays at 9:15am

Experience in-depth biblical teaching from experienced leaders at FBCOKC! We always have a place for you. Check out the group options below and email <a href="mailto:bradstewart@fbcokc.org">bradstewart@fbcokc.org</a> if you have any questions or want help connecting with a group. Our Bible study groups meet on Sundays at 9:15am in various locations around FBCOKC.

#### **Young Adults**

**Ages**: 20's – 35

Location: Conference Room

(across from church office on 1st floor)

**Contact**: Brad Stewart

#### **Middle Ground**

**Ages**: 30's-40's

**Location:** Ground Floor Across From Coffee Shop

(by men's restroom)

**Contact**: Victoria Malony

#### **Higher Ground**

**Ages**: 40's – 50's

**Location**: The Parlor

(Ground Floor next to Chapel)

**Contact**: Brenda Cline

#### **Coffee Shop Collective**

**Ages**: All ages

**Location**: Coffee Shop

(Ground Floor)

**Contact**: Marie Davis

#### **Chapel Class**

Ages: All ages

**Location**: The Library

(1st floor just off The Commons)

**Contact**: Toni Adams

#### **Good Shepherd Class**

**Ages:** All Ages

**Location**: Small Conference Room (across from church office on 1st floor)

**Contact:** Alan Hicks

#### **YOUTH Bible Study**

**Ages**: 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grades **Location**: Youth Center

(Ground Floor just outside CareForOKC)

**Contact**: Ariel Koerner

#### **CHILDREN'S Bible Study**

**Ages**: Babies – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Location**: Children's Wing (1st floor)

**Contact**: Ariel Koerner

## Connect

#### **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 <a href="mailto:bradstewart@fbcokc.org">bradstewart@fbcokc.org</a> 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.

#### 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

# 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.

This building we call home has been the launching pad for over a hundred churches throughout our state. Within these walls, every Sunday morning, our halls are filled with worship from around the world. We currently have three congregations in addition to ours, worshiping at our church: Trinity Chinese Baptist Church, Sudanese Christian Community Church, and Redeemed Presbyterian Church. Our building is full of life every day of the week!

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 is nearing the end of its reconstruction. This is part of the Academy renovations. We will 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 new sign when we are finally ready to move forward. 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 will raise the funds, recruit volunteers, work with our Building and Grounds Committee, and lead the effort to update the space. He plans to work on this project in September. What a blessing!

Beginning in October, the Academy will start work on replacing the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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!

This year, we rented the gym to local sports teams, including soccer, volleyball, and basketball clubs. We hosted more weddings and have plans to host even more in 2026. We hosted the YMCA Summer Camp for 4 to 6-year-olds and loved every minute of it. We received nearly \$5000 through this partnership with the YMCA. We offered our south parking lot to the Thunder during the amazing parade this summer and used our north parking lot for event parking, raising around \$3300. We rented portions of our parking lot for 5 weeks this spring to a local construction company needing parking for their workers. This year, we will host four large events for city-wide and nation-wide worship events and gatherings. In October, 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.



# Birthdays

# BIRDAY

Penn Cline - 9/1

Emily Self - 9/2

Brenda Cline - 9/2

Jon Tillinghast - 9/4

Matthew Kinkade - 9/4

Tom Nash - 9/6

Claudine Dickey - 9/11

Ralph Beal - 9/14

Patrick Browne - 9/14

Roxane Jensen - 9/15

Matt Malony - 9/15

Kenda Rankin - 9/15

Lu Dora Overmon - 9/16

Diane Ligon - 9/16

Martha Johnson - 9/18

Bill Harrison - 9/21

Gene Stewart - 9/22

Armando Pena - 9/23

Mary Ray - 9/23

Steve Nath - 9/24

Debbie Stearns - 9/25

Ashley Wallace - 9/26

Kylee Gregston - 9/26

Torrance Bowen - 9/27

Gina Antipov - 9/28

Margaret Wilson - 9/29

# Recent Events



January



**February** 



March



April



May



June



July



August

# Year at a Glance

#### September

September 14 OKC Comets Baseball Game September 19-20 Elementary Kids Retreat September 21 Evensong Service September 28 First Family Feast September 30 Deacons Meeting

#### October

October 1 Quarterly Business Meeting October 5 FBCOKC Follies October 25 Trunk or Treat October 30 Rooted Luncheon

#### **November**

November 14-16 Youth Fall Retreat November 16 Building Wide Gratitude Feast November 23 Decoration 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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