



Repeat the Sounding Joy

Devotions for Advent 2025

Dear Church Family,

Let us rejoice and "repeat the sounding joy!" This season is a time for celebration as we remember the incredible gift of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Advent, which comes from the Latin word "adventus," meaning "the coming," is a special time for Christians all over the world to prepare for the birth of Jesus, who brings hope and love into our lives.

From the fourth Sunday before Christmas until Christmas Eve, families light candles on an Advent wreath, with each candle representing hope, peace, joy, and love. It's a wonderful opportunity to come together, read uplifting stories from the Bible, and spread kindness and generosity within our community, all while anticipating the joy of Christmas!

One of my favorite Christmas hymns is "Joy to the World," as it beautifully expresses that Jesus is the only source of true joy in this world. As believers, we carry a tremendous responsibility and privilege to share this joy with those around us.

God created us to be social beings, and the joy of God should not be confined to our hearts; it should flow among us and transform how we communicate with one another. When we celebrate Christmas and sing hymns, our focus should be on Christ. This mindset should permeate our lives; our joy must be shared not only during the Christmas season but year-round. As the world continues to change, we must remember that just as Christ was born to take away our sins, He will one day return to bring His redeemed home.

During the busyness of the holiday season, I encourage you to pause, sit quietly, read God's Word, and reflect on the devotionals written by your friends and family. These devotionals share personal stories of what hope, joy, peace, and love mean to each of us. This Advent devotional book will also help you get to know one another better and put faces to names.

I want to express my gratitude to those who wrote these heartfelt messages to share with our church family. You are truly appreciated! Lastly, my prayer for our church family is that you experience hope, joy, peace, and love through Jesus during this season. Let us join together and "repeat the sounding joy" of Jesus Christ. God is good!

Toni

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HOPE

God Leads Us

Mike Wester

I need hope! Don't we all. I couldn't get through the day without it. So, what gives me hope? Two things keep my hope alive. The first is repeated in every Christmas story, and that is the proclamation that God is with us. Immanuel. It is an incredible idea that God is actively involved in everything that makes us. But there are days when life is hard. There are days when you feel alone, unnoticed, totally unprepared. Strangely enough, this is where I find my second reason for hope. God has not left, but our vision has dimmed for many reasons. It is when I feel most separated, most alone, that I begin to recall the stories that make up the events of my life.

In 1 John 1:1-4, the writer speaks about what they have seen with their own eyes and felt with their own hands. He says that we write to you so that your joy might be complete. John was the youngest of the 12 disciples and the last to write of those who wrote the books and letters that compose our Bible. It is estimated that he wrote as much as 30 years after the other writings had been completed. He writes during or after being imprisoned, with little reason in his current life to have hope. He had seen or heard about the violent deaths of the other disciples, as well as so many people, including entire families that had been destroyed for following Christ. So how does he feel joy and maintain hope? His life experiences had taught him that God is with us. God walks with us, sometimes carries us, always showing us the way forward, even when we do not see the way. In the Lord's Prayer, we ask God to lead us, not just away from temptation, but to actually lead us. He is my hope. He is the reason for my joy. He helps me go forward because he has always been. He is Immanuel.

Mike Wester is happily retired with his wife, Doyleen, and has been a member of First OKC for almost three years. They started attending online just before COVID hit. They love working with Care for OKC. They have four grown children and nine grandchildren. Mike has been a pastor and has been privileged to serve among Native American Churches. Some people think Mike is mischievous.



Time Passes

CJ Capraro

In defining hope, it may help to find its antonym. The first word that comes to my mind is despair, but to me, melancholy or ennui are more appropriate. Hope just means we care about something; that something better lies in our future. Yesterday, I hoped getting my tooth pulled would be easy. I quickly learned it was not going to be easy. I asked if I could keep my tooth, a molar, to show Ezra. The dental assistant assured me that it wouldn't be a problem. However, forty-five minutes later, after seemingly endless yanking, pulling, grinding, and sawing in my numb mouth, a half dozen pieces of tooth were freed. Afterwards, my dentist told me a portion of my tooth had fused with my jawbone, a (rare) condition called "tooth ankylosis," which could not have been discovered beforehand.

Anyways, the only hope I had sitting in that dentist chair was the hope that it had to end eventually. Time always passes. "For in Your sight a thousand years are like yesterday that passes by, like a few hours in the night." Psalm 90:4 Some could say that the only thing we have to hope for, the only thing absolutely for certain, is that time must pass and our lives will eventually end. This is probably true, though Christ could return before we are called home. But even our expiration is not something we can rely on fully. "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more." Revelation 21:4 Our best and most lasting hope is that Christ has conquered death (see 2 Timothy 1:10), but I will be the first to admit that it can be hard to focus on as your tooth is getting fished out of your gums with tweezers. But the time always passes.



CJ is an appellate public defender who represents clients from Western Oklahoma. He is Ezra and Walter's father and Lauren's spouse. He wrote this story immediately after experiencing "one of the harder [tooth] extractions" his dentist had performed, where he "just couldn't get a good angle on it."

Through Our Night

Lane Davis

I'm that boy who got just as much enjoyment out of planning to spend the night outside in a tent in the backyard as I did from the actual experience. It was exciting to pack all the things I imagined I would need. At the top of my list was a flashlight with new batteries.

I'm also the boy who started feeling a tiny bit disappointed as soon as the nighttime adventures began, knowing that the batteries in my flashlight would not last. I knew I had to ration the use of my flashlight to make it last longer.

As a grown man, if I'm not careful, I equate my understanding of hope with the

same world of logic and reason as that boy with his flashlight. I become distracted from the infinite light of Jesus, and I look to sources of manufactured light that begin to fade as soon as they appear. Doubt creeps in through schemes of darkness, and I believe lies.

I rely on this community of believers to help me see the difference between this dark world and our home. I see Christ in you. I pray you see Him in me. His light shines forever through our night. May we encourage each other with His hope.

As we look forward to Christmastime, let's celebrate the first *appearance of God's Light*. Let's also celebrate the *Light of Christ in us, the hope of glory*.

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus" – Titus 2:11-15

"Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." – Colossians 1:25-27

I am God's child and Sabrina's husband, and we are grateful to be Austin's parents. We love walking together with Jesus in this beautiful family of believers.



Hope in God's Strength

Armando Peña

The word hope, as used in everyday language, often conveys doubt. For instance, "I hope I will find a good parking space at the grocery store." There may be a parking space to my liking, but then again, there may not be one at all. However, the meaning of the word usually translated as "hope" in the Bible is different. In scripture, the word hope carries the meaning of confidence, security, and safety - the concept of doubt is not there. Therefore, **biblical hope is a confident expectation or assurance based upon a sure foundation for which we wait with joy and full confidence.** In other words, "There is no doubt about it!" In addition, "hope" is often linked to faith. The best examples of this hope/faith relationship are recorded in Hebrews 11, where the actions of the "heroes of the faith" were made possible because they held on to faith based on their confident assurance or hope in God.

For several years, my family has faced numerous challenges – mostly medically related. Quite honestly, it would have been easy to lose hope. For my wife, Abby, her challenge was the diagnosis of breast cancer in 2012, surgeries, radiation, and months of chemotherapy. For our oldest daughter, Veronica, it was serious asthma; then the failure of her ability to breathe, followed by a tracheostomy, complicated now by the need for kidney dialysis three times per week. For our daughter Stephanie, the challenge has been diabetes and its side effects, limiting her ability to walk on her own.

Speaking for myself, the hardest part of maintaining hope these past years has been waiting for God to act on our behalf. But to God's glory, the waiting need not be in vain – God is already acting. It is part of His plan. The waiting time has brought beautiful prayers for us from our church family, wonderful fellowship, and most importantly, opportunities for spiritual growth.

...I can do all this through Him who gives me strength. Philippians 4:13

Abby and I have been members of First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, for nearly 18 years. We are both retired educators and have two adult daughters. My greatest privilege has been to teach from the Bible from time to time as the need arises.



Hope In Knowing What Is Eternal

Lucas Goodspeed



To discuss hope on a personal level, you must reflect on times in your life when you had doubts or were uncertain about something. One somewhat silly example that comes to mind is from this past basketball season, when the Thunder won the NBA title. Hayley and I were dialed in, never missing a minute. After defeating Minnesota, we were positive that the title was ours. We felt much the same way for most of game 1 of the finals, as we had a comfortable lead for 90% of

the game. However, like many of you, we watched on with agony as the lead slipped from our fingers – culminating with a last-second shot that sealed the game for the other team. After the game, Hayley and I had a solid 30 minutes (okay, probably longer) where we vented about every negative thing that happened over the course of the game. To put it simply, we found ourselves without much hope that our guys would be able to bring the title to our city.

Thankfully, as I'm sure we are all aware by now, our fears did not come true. And again, although a silly example, I find that this story mirrors in a lot of ways other, more serious times in my life. There are reasons for hope, usually in abundance, but it can be so hard to stay fixated on them. And the fears and doubts, no matter how irrational, seem to be the only thing your mind wants to focus on. The truth is that, even if we did lose, the pain would only have been temporary. Eventually, we would have found ourselves looking forward to next year, excited for another chance to claim the trophy. And honestly, even if I had used a more serious example, the same would have been true. The truth is that our struggles are temporary, but our hope is not. Our hope comes from knowing that we are children of God. We are His, and He made us. He loves us and is with us always, and that will never change.

Lucas Goodspeed has attended FBCOKC along with his wife, Hayley, for the past five years. He works for Forvis Mazars as a tax accountant (where his wife also works in the audit department). When he is not working, he is most likely on a walk with his wife and their dog, Pepper.

Hope & Faith

Brenda Cline

While shopping for home decor, I came across a wall grouping consisting of 3 framed prints. It consisted of three words: "hope", "&", "faith". I loved the simple design of the black letters on burlap, and these framed prints became the inspiration for decorating my powder room with burlap and blackboards.



While familiar with the verse in 1 Corinthians 13:13, "Now these three remain: faith, hope, and love – but the greatest of these is love", it wasn't until I began to think about the meaning behind the word "Hope" that I contemplated how faith and hope are so deeply intertwined.

We hope for many things. Will my baby be born healthy? I hope so. Will I get that college acceptance letter? I hope so. Will my fractured family heal? I hope so. Will my loved one's cancer be cured? I hope so. Each expression of hope is a verb: an action, wishful thinking. We don't know that we will get into the college program we want. We don't know if our baby will be healthy or if family relationships will be healed. We don't know if our husband will survive cancer. We can hope; we can pray, but we can't know beforehand.

But there is a hope that we can know beforehand. It is a noun: a person, a place, and a thing. But like so many things described in the Bible, it is a concept difficult to grasp fully. It is the joyful and confident expectation of something, like eternal salvation. It is the joyful and confident expectation of the resurrection and a home in heaven. It is the joyful and confident expectation in the word of truth, the gospel, in Christ.

That's where faith comes in. Our hope does not rest on wishful thinking. It rests on Christ, who is our hope. It is through faith in Him and His promises that we can know these things.

MY HOPE IS BUILT ON NOTHING LESS by Edward Mote (1834)

*(1) My hope is built on nothing less
than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
but wholly lean on Jesus' name.*

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*(2) When darkness veils his lovely face,
I rest on his unchanging grace;
In every high and stormy gale,
my anchor holds within the veil.*

*(3) His oath, his covenant, his blood,
Support me in the whelming flood;
When all around my soul gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay.*

*(4) When he shall come with trumpet sound,
O may I then in him be found:
Dressed in his righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne.*

As we celebrate Advent, may it remind us that Christ is our Hope, and it is our Faith in Jesus, the faithful One, that makes this joyful and confident expectation possible.

“Let us hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, since he who promised is faithful.” Hebrews 10:23

I am married to Penn and have been a member at FBC OKC since November 2024. We have three children (two daughters and one son), 2 sons-in-law, and 8 grandchildren; 6 in Florida and 2 that live close by, so we get to enjoy spending time with them when they are not too busy for Mom. I am recently retired and thoroughly enjoy it. Recently, we adopted a young Poochon named Bigsby. I love music, singing in the church choir, and teaching the Higher Ground Adult Class.

Hope Enough for the Next Step

Cara Cobb

I once toured the inside of a cave that had been dug deep inside a mountain. We were using electric lanterns to tour the insides, and at one point, the tour guide encouraged us to turn off the lamps and stand in the darkness. The darkness was overwhelming. It was pitch black, so much so that you could almost feel it.

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As we stood there in the dark, the tour guide lit a candle and explained how at the time the cave had been discovered, the explorers had used candles to light their path. The candle emitted so little light that it was just enough to see the very next footfall. To me, this gave new meaning to the verse: “Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” Psalm 119:105. In other words, sometimes we have just enough hope to take the very next step. Sometimes these small steps register as just enough to sustain us in the darkness. Job took a step by seeking God in the midst of intense suffering; Paul offered hope through encouragement and in the breaking of bread during a storm. And I have seen it in the face of new life during much loss.

At Job 7, we encounter Job in the midst of a deep depression. He takes to his bed to escape the bitterness of his soul (7:14), when time seems to move both too slow and too fast (7:1-3, 6, 16). He declares: “My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, and they come to an end *without hope*.” Job 7:6. But the hope of encountering God himself is a hope that, in fact, sustains him. While Job declared his hopelessness, he yet continued to hope in the only one who could satisfactorily answer his deep questions brought on by much suffering (Job 13:15).

And during the storm described in Acts 27, we encounter men so desperate to escape the thrashing waves that they seek to throw themselves overboard. “Since neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small storm was assailing us, from then on *all hope* of our being saved *was slowly abandoned*.” Acts 27:20. In the face of this hopelessness, Paul responded by encouraging them to hold on (27:22, 25), and to eat (27:33).

By November 2024, I had already lost my brother and my mother. But I sat bedside with my father at Mercy Hospital who would soon follow. It felt like loss had stacked on top of loss. But during a visit at the hospital, my son and daughter-in-law told Dad that he would be a great-grandfather. My little grandson is a joy in my life, in a life where I have much cause for joy despite a good bit of grief.

I see this repeatedly in the Word which continues to light my path—that sometimes we have to mine for hope, search for it as explorers in the dark, certain we will find it and that it will offer just enough light for the next step. In the course of losing much, I have gained much, too. I hope that as you reflect during this advent season that you find such hope in your own life.

Cara is a wife, mother, grandmother, friend, practicing attorney, and member of the church where she regularly attends with her husband Jason and youngest son Ben.

PEACE

Lost & Found

Gladys Lewis

Three years ago, a series of losses became my continuing experience. Some were voluntary. I lost my home when I decided I no longer wanted to continue maintenance on a property and therefore put my house on the market. I contacted the managers at the Fountains at Canterbury and started a remodel of my assigned apartment. Other voluntary losses came with the donation of my wonderful library to the University of Central Oklahoma library and my professional wardrobe to FBCOKC's Care4OKC.

But independent losses began to bombard me. Lost mail was part of my address change. The Fountain facility owners voted to sell the Fountains, and I was told the day I returned from closing on my house that I would need to evict. I was homeless! My furnishings and possessions were lost as they were scattered among storage units. My spacious, redecorated apartment was lost with a move to a tiny one at Touchmark, but with my name on a list for a larger one; loss of mail, stage 2. With the move to the larger apartment and address change, mail loss 3. After my family took what they wanted from the off-site storage, I moved the remaining items and boxes to Touchmark. With unpacked boxes, I realized other losses of personal items. The greatest loss of all was giving up driving and my car, which meant loss of independence and attendance at FBCOKC. I could watch services online, but for two years, I could not attend.

Then, my granddaughter, Hailey, turned sixteen, could drive, and took me to church. The first time, when we drove up by the green canopy at the south entrance, emotion possessed me. I cried with joy as I was back within the doors of my beloved church, my place of worship. I cried to be back, sitting in a pew. After a bit, emotion subsided, and I felt a flood of peace. From the first verse of Psalm 122, I knew the truth of the words, "I was glad when they said unto me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord'" and verses 7 and 9, "May peace be within your walls. . . May peace be within you." All my losses were lost in the peace that is eternal.

Gladys Lewis, a member of FBCOKC for 40 years, has been a medical missionary in Paraguay, an active leader and speaker in Baptist settings, and is a retired faculty member from the English Department of the University of Central Oklahoma. She enjoys writing comic routines for entertainment.



Peace In Selfless Focus

Colin Bray

In my life, I have found that peace ultimately only comes from a relationship with Jesus Christ. I have found myself most at peace when I focus my mind on doing God's work, not on my own concerns. Counterintuitively, one of the best tools I've found to achieve peace for myself is selflessness.

I have found it easy to find angst when I turn inwards and focus on my own goals and ambitions, as a failed outcome for me personally leaves me nothing to fall back on. When I truly leave my personal ambitions behind, however, it does not matter if my own self-serving interests are met.

This provides a sense of freedom and of a burden lifted. If I focus my efforts on serving others, it gives me a higher purpose to strive towards, and through prayer and constant engagement with scripture, I can feel confident that I can align my efforts with God's will. I've found that I need to regularly pray and study God's Word to be truly at peace. This, combined with selfless focus on serving others, has been the way I have found the most peace in my life.

It is not always easy or convenient to me personally, but the more I strive to consistently pray and learn God's Word, using this knowledge to serve others, the more at peace I feel. I hope to make a point of praying, reading scripture, and serving others more consistently this Advent season and in the years to come.

Philippians 4:6-7

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."



Colin and his wife, Makena, have been members of FBC OKC for several years. Colin serves as a deacon and as a member of the building and grounds committee, and Makena serves on the outreach committee. Colin enjoys football and rugby and is a big-time fan of OU and Georgia.

Receiving Jesus This Advent

Ryan Bowen

Did you know that Americans are expected to spend more than \$ 1 trillion on gifts this holiday season? A trillion stacked dollar bills could reach the International Space Station 2.5 times, plus some!

What's gained by this spending? On December 26th, will we wake up as transformed, peace-filled people?

We can spend more than a trillion dollars and still lack deep, abiding peace.

As Christians, we already know that Jesus Christ is more valuable than the entire creation - sun, moon, planets, and galaxies combined. No better gift has been given:

“For God so loved the world in this way: he gave his one and only Son.” (John 3:16)

“You were redeemed from your empty way of life inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ” (1 Peter 1:18-19).

Christmas is when we celebrate that Jesus Christ, God Himself, was given to the world as the most incomprehensibly valuable gift that could ever be given. God's creation includes many wondrous things to enjoy, some of which we will choose to give to one another as Christmas gifts this year. But the most valuable gift any of us could receive was given 2,000 years ago in a stable in Bethlehem. That baby, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger, is the Prince of Peace, more valuable and more lasting than anything we can put under a tree or place in a stocking. I'm praying His Spirit will help me to accept, embrace, and surrender to this wonderful gift of peace this Christmas.



Ryan and his family have lived in OKC and attended FBC for a little more than two years. He works in Healthcare Operations and enjoys spending what (little!) downtime he has playing with his two sons, reading all kinds of books, taking pictures, and being outside.

Pockets of Peace

Ariel Koerner

These last few years have felt anything but peaceful. There have been so many things going on in my life that make peace seem impossible to achieve. When Toni asked me to write this, I struggled because how can I write about peace when I don't feel it? It has caused me to look back and reflect on the past year and see the little pockets of peace.

January started with going to Wilmington, NC, for my cohort retreat through Baptist Women in Ministry. We

spent time on the beach (though it was cold) just relaxing. That was truly a peaceful moment. Watching the waves crash and hearing all the birds and feeling the wind. That is a formula that brings peace to me.

February started a crazy time with my father having knee surgery, which did not end up how we wanted it to. Where did I find pockets of peace there? I found them in the waiting. Sitting in the hospital room. That seemed very unpeaceful, but it was calming in a sense. Having a cup of really bad hospital coffee and just being there for my dad was peace-giving.

Then April came, and I felt peace was going to be hard to find. Holy Week was one of the hardest weeks I've ever lived, but it was also one of the most peaceful. My nannie always told me that Holy Week was when the hummingbirds would come to her house. That is always a peaceful moment for me, just sitting on her front porch, watching the hummingbirds, and hearing the fast flap of their wings. This Holy Week, we spent at my nannie's bedside as she left this world. There was something peaceful about sitting there, holding her hand, singing hymns over her, and just being still. The hummingbirds even arrived the day before she passed. I had never been with someone in those last days before, and it was a sorrowful and peaceful moment. It brought me closer to God in ways I can't put into words. Peace in the end.



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The following months brought Kids Off Broadway, summer camps, back-to-school activities, and much more. The pockets of peace I found were in the still. The sitting in the sanctuary after KOB was over with the mess all around, the nights at camp when the kids and youth were enjoying each other's company, and the adults could just rest. In the mornings, I stand outside with a cup of coffee and watch my playful dogs. Getting pho with my sister and sitting in silence, enjoying our food. Standing on top of Pikes Peak with David, viewing God's creation. Getting to be with wolves (my favorite animal) and one of them kissing (licking) my face.

There will always be pockets of peace, but sometimes you can't see them in that moment. You might have to look back, and then you will find them. I hope you find your pockets of peace this Christmas season. Peace in knowing God sent his son to us as a baby. Peace while we wait for the coming Messiah. Peace in the chaos of Christmas. Peace in the silent nights. Peace in the aftermath of Christmas presents being ripped open. Peace in family moments. Peace in the Manger.

Ariel Koerner was called as Minister for Young Families in August of 2021. She grew up in this church and felt the call to ministry while in college. Ariel was born and raised in Oklahoma City and attended Oklahoma Baptist University, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in music, voice emphasis. After college, she worked in the financial sector, where she met her husband, David. Before serving at FBC, Ariel worked for the State of Oklahoma and volunteered as Praise Leader at FBCOKC. This church is her home, and she is humbled to serve the church that served her so well.

Peace? But I'm a Mom!

Kate Millar

I am the proud mother of two beautiful children, ages 5 and 2.5. I am also a career woman, with 17 years of experience as a forensic scientist and now supervisor. I am the quintessential Working Mom. And when I think of peace, I think of when I'm putting the 2.5-year-old to bed. Only minutes prior, he was running around like the Energizer Bunny, throwing balls in the house, refusing to eat dinner, while I tried to be present and shake off the anxieties of the workday.



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But then, after the teeth are brushed and the stories are read, he lies in my arms and snores softly. The chaos has succumbed to sleep and drools onto my shirt. It is in those moments that I feel at peace. But God's Peace is more than just the absence of chaos—it's a deep, lasting harmony rooted in God's presence. It is the perfect life He intended for Himself and us, His creation; the life He first created for Adam and Eve. But after sin entered the world, that peace was lost. The only way for that peace to be restored was through Jesus, who was identified as the Prince of Peace in Isaiah 9:6.

The peace God desires for us to have is not an absence of war, chaos, or struggle. That's impossible in our broken world. The peace God gifts us allows for a calm heart and settled spirit despite the horrors that may surround us. And that peace truly is a gift. It is not dependent on circumstances; it is not earned or taught. It is a gift we must accept.

And usually I'm great at receiving gifts, who isn't? I'm the first to say thank you, give a hug, send a note, etc., but this peace is a gift I struggle to accept. All the dark thoughts, the anxieties, the what ifs, the unknowns are louder than the peace. Very similar to all the noise my children make when they're awake! It's distracting and can be stressful. And if I were better at accepting that gift of peace, at ignoring those dark thoughts, I know I'd be a better mother, a better employee, a better wife, and a better witness.

So, as we focus on the Advent theme of peace this week, I pray we may reflect on the ways Jesus calls us to be peacemakers in our lives. Advent peace encourages us to let go of our anxieties, trusting in God's love and guidance. It is difficult to do and requires practice. Some days, weeks, or years may be easier than others. I still struggle to accept God's Peace when I'm wrapped up in my own version of chaos. I pray you may accept God's Peace, know you're not alone, and know that you are loved by God and your church family.

Kate is married to Will. Their two kids are Evie (5) and Liam (2.5). She is the supervisor/technical manager of the firearms & toolmarks unit at OSBI. In her "free time," she loves watching sports and cross-stitching (yes, at the same time).

Let There Be Peace on Earth

Susan Clothier

Christmas at FBC OKC has always been special in so many ways: the sanctuary overflowing with evergreens and poinsettias, the children's choir candlelight service, the carols and anthems ringing clear. Advent, however (like anything liturgical) was not observed here until minister of music Allen York brought it into our church calendar. As a 50's model Southern Baptist, we weren't sure about this at first. I made it part of my ministry at Spring Creek Baptist. Of course, Advent is summed up in the themes for the four Sundays: Hope, Peace, Love, and Joy.



As musicians, the first thing most of us think of when the word Peace comes up, are the words of Isaiah in Handel's Messiah: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called "Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace," but we can also look at "It is Well With My Soul, I've Got Peace Like a River, Wonderful Peace, and Let There be Peace on Earth".

Let There Be Peace on Earth is the result of a collaboration between Sy Miller and his wife, Jill Jackson Miller. Jill had previously suffered through a low time in her life, even attempting suicide. During this time, she learned for the first time that God is really the one who loves us unconditionally. She felt for the first time that she had been given assurance that she was truly loved and lived for a purpose. She then discovered a love for writing and began to produce songs with her husband.

In 1955, she wrote the lyrics that became "Let There Be Peace on Earth". Sy and Jill introduced the song at a youth retreat in California attended by participants from various religious, socio-economic, and ethnic backgrounds. The purpose of the retreat was to bring students together to develop friendships, skills to work together, and open discussion of differences and similarities.

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Now more than ever, we can look at the lyrics of this song and realize the tremendous power of **let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me!** Peace is found in quiet time, “windshield time”, listening to music, and any time we are still enough to hear the voice of God and feel His presence.

Here’s praying for a wonderfully peaceful holiday season.

Native Oklahoman, Susan Clothier, has enjoyed success as a distinguished teacher and music minister for 4 decades. She holds a MM from Hardin-Simmons University and attended Oklahoma City University for her Undergraduate Studies. Her teaching career took her throughout Oklahoma to Washington, Tuttle, Tecumseh, and back home to Oklahoma City, where she spent the final 19 years of her teaching career at Putnam City North High School.

She was named Teacher of the Year in every school in which she served.

A pioneer in her field, she was the first female director of the Falls Creek Baptist Assembly Band, a post she held for 26 years. She served as Conductor of the Oklahoma Baptist All-State Youth Orchestra for several years. In addition, Susan was named Bandmaster of the Year and inducted into the Oklahoma Bandmasters Hall of Fame, and was recently inducted into the Oklahoma Music Educators Hall of Fame.

She currently directs the “Friends” Band, consisting of Senior adults.

Her student successes include professional musicians in Broadway Shows, Symphony Orchestras, Theater Orchestras, Chanticleer, DFW Brass, Military Bands, University Professors, and teachers in prominent music classrooms everywhere.

Now semi-retired, Ms. Clothier, lovingly known by her students as “Ms. C”, serves as a clinician educational representative for Palen Music Center. Her love of visiting band rooms will never end!

Jesus, Be With Me In The Boat!

Tim Tillinghast

Peace is not just the absence of *conflict* or *war*. It's a positive thing in and of itself, just as *rest* is more than the absence of *work*. Real peace is a state of heart that is positive, a fullness sometimes described as shalom or flourishing.

As many of you know, I survived an "active shooter" terrorist attack in March of 2016 in the Ivory Coast. The Sunday before that happened, the sermon was on Jesus calming the storm (Luke 8, Mark 4, Matthew 8). Jesus was asleep in the boat, totally at peace, while the storm was raging. The disciples, on the other hand, thought they were going to drown and woke Jesus up. The takeaway from that sermon was that when we face troubles, we are to pray "***Jesus, be with me in the boat!***"



One week after that sermon, I found myself up on top of a wall in a dark room with the sound of crashing ocean waves not 50 yards away and the sound of continual gunfire much closer for 90 minutes. I wish I could say that I was tranquilly sleeping as Jesus did - calm and at peace. But I was not. I remembered that sermon and prayed "***Jesus, be with me in the boat***". Sometimes all that you have available in crisis are simple prayers.

Peace did not come to my heart while I was in that room. For the disciples, peace did not come until AFTER Jesus calmed the waves. In my case, we were rescued by some special forces and eventually found our way back home. The immediate danger was gone but peace did not really return to my heart. I left Ivory Coast a few weeks later and returned to Cameroon. There was an absence of trauma, but I wasn't really at peace - still on edge for the next month or two.

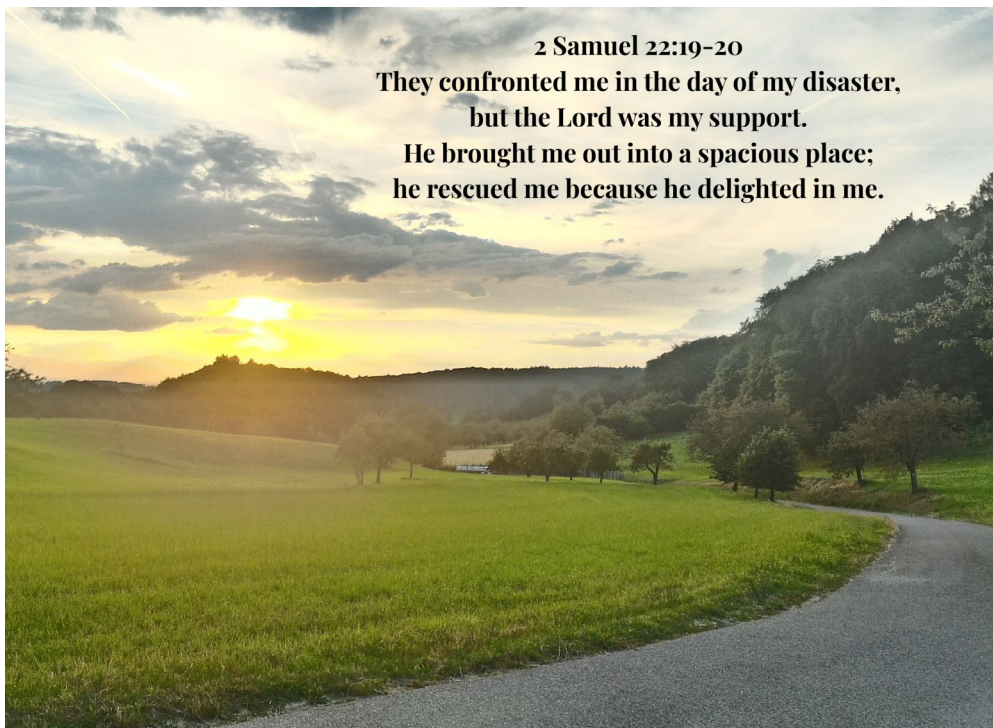
If you have never lived in an African city, I don't think you can know the sense of constant noise that one experiences at all times. Your windows are always open. Trucks and motorcycles going by with horns blaring. There are animals of all sorts - goats, sheep, dogs, cows, birds. There is always someone off in the distance talking loudly. At night, there is music blaring from night clubs. And then at 4:30 a.m. the mosque across the street gives the call to prayer.

In June 2016, three months or so after the attack, I moved from Cameroon to a small town in Germany to start my next assignment. I had an overnight flight and arrived mid-morning.

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I was picked up and driven to a guesthouse and had lunch. Then I lay down for a nap. An hour or so later I woke up suddenly - almost startled by the silence. "What's that sound? . . . Absolutely nothing!"

God used that time in Germany for a fresh start and a time to build peace and refreshment into my heart! I spent a lot of time exploring the beautiful paths and bike trails through forests and green meadows. One evening, I crested the hill on a bike ride at sunset and caught this view. It lines up with this verse that I had discovered.



2 Samuel 22:19-20

**They confronted me in the day of my disaster,
but the Lord was my support.**

**He brought me out into a spacious place;
he rescued me because he delighted in me.**

In advent, we look forward to the coming of Jesus and the Peace that he brings to our lives and to the world. If you are experiencing a storm, ask Jesus to be with you in the boat and trust him to bring calm to the situation and to your heart in his time, because he delights in you!

JOY

Joy Is Everything To Do With Christ

Chris Pinto

If you had asked me a decade ago what the goal of my life was, I would have said something like: “be happy, make a lot of money, and do something great that others will remember.” Little did I know that it was already spelled out for me in Matthew 22:36-40. What resonates the most for me is “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” The commandment is not to love when you are ready, love when you feel like it, or love when it is easiest or most convenient for you.

For me, one of the ways I try to practice this is with my time with Care 4 OKC. I love getting together with my church family to serve our local community. It is not always easy. Some Mondays are longer than others, or the work can feel emotionally or physically taxing. Despite these doubts or low motivation, God allows us to love his creation. To be his hands and feet. To show *HIS* love through *OUR* actions. What could be perceived as a can of green beans, or an extra coat, could make a world of difference in the life of one of our community members.

For me, true joy can only be found in our love for Christ. The beauty of this simple truth is that it has NOTHING to do with us and EVERYTHING to do with Christ. From a hopeless ending to an endless hope- we can love God, love others, and make disciples. My prayers for you, Church Family, are to find joy in your love for our Savior.

Christopher Pinto is an Oklahoman as of October 2023. He moved here from Houston, Texas, for a job with Imagine Learning, supporting our smaller public-school districts in rural parts of the state. Christopher is currently Quadrilingual (English, Spanish, Portuguese, & Italian) and is attempting to add French to his mix!



Everyday Grace

Makenna Bray

Joy is one of God's sweetest gifts, yet it's often hidden in the places we overlook. Over the past year, I have been intentional about slowing down, noticing the small blessings around me, and choosing joy, even when life feels heavy.

Life truly is short, and God never intended for us to rush through it without delight. Joy isn't found only in the big mountaintop moments; it's woven into everyday grace: worshipping the Lord, sharing a meal with family, laughing with friends, doing work you



care about, or taking time for the hobbies that refresh your spirit. Even the simplest moments, like sitting with my husband at the end of a long day, can become sacred when you pause long enough to notice them.

But life is also undeniably hard. We don't all struggle the same, and some seasons feel heavier than others. In those moments, joy can feel distant or fragile. Yet even then, God reminds us that *there is always something to be thankful for*. Gratitude is not pretending everything is perfect. It's recognizing that even in the imperfect, God is present and His presence brings joy.

Every small moment of joy is a reminder that God is still working, still loving, still sending little glimpses of His goodness into the everyday. When you choose to slow down and find joy in the little things, you're not just practicing positivity; you're practicing faith.

"This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." —
Psalms 118:24

Makenna and her husband, Colin, have been attending FBC OKC since April 2020. Originally from Houston, TX, Makenna has called Oklahoma home since 2016. She and Colin have been married for almost five years and live in Piedmont, OK, with their wonderful German Shepherd, Luna. Makenna works for Canadian County CASA, a nonprofit organization where she channels her passion for serving others into advocating for children and families and helping them find hope during difficult times. FBC OKC has brought them many meaningful friendships and connections, and they are deeply grateful for such a loving community.

The Joy of Play

Brad Stewart

A few years ago, I took Griffin to a birthday party for one of his friends at a park. It was Springtime and the weather was perfect. Just a slight chance of rain. The exuberance of the children was a sight to behold. Kids were climbing ladders, going down slides, doing monkey bars, playing tag, and laughing as they told each other their stories. Kids are the best because they make friends instantly at the park. They don't even know each other's names, and they are already best friends.

As the party progressed through the afternoon, that slight chance of rain started to grow as the rainclouds came rumbling in. Sprinkles turned into more consistent rain which eventually turned into a downpour. Thankfully by the time the downpour came the party was nearing its end and everyone was starting to leave. As Griffin and I huddled under a little overhang by the playground preparing to leave, I asked him if he wanted to go play in the rain. "But we'll get wet", he said. "Yeah, that's true", I replied. "But wouldn't it be fun?!"

We stepped out into the rain that Spring afternoon and had a blast. It reminded me once again that playing is such a huge source of joy in this life. In his book *The Way of Play: Reclaiming Divine Fun and Celebration*, Victor Shamas writes, "Play is a sacred act. When we are playing, the essence of all creation flows freely through us. We are expressing our true nature and connecting with the One who has created us for such a purpose. There's nothing more spiritual than that."



As we enter this holy season of Advent, may we play. May we laugh, not take ourselves too seriously, and embrace the divine joy of God with us. May we let down our defenses and allow the wonder and joy of Jesus to wash over our apathy, cynicism, and hardness of heart. Lord, teach us to play.

Brad and Sarah have had the JOY of belonging to FBCOKC for almost 20 years and getting to raise their sons with an incredible church family. Brad loves to read, watch movies, take Lily (our dog) for walks, and go hiking. He's very excited about this beginning this new season of ministry as Minister for Missions at FBCOKC!

Joy in serving

Susan Yback

Losing your parents isn't easy. Even though it's inevitable. When I lost my dad last year, I became detached. I was on autopilot, continuing my work as a painter and potter. Delving further into my work, I was able to find some satisfaction. Through teaching, I can connect with children, helping them with their art. I looked forward to the Saturdays I worked with my hearing-impaired student, especially. Seeing her grow and excel at her work, hearing about her accomplishments at school, all became something to look forward to.



Then, this summer, the gallery got a new artist from the Ivory Coast. His main form of transportation was a scooter. When he asked if someone could give him a ride, I'd drag myself to the mall. Pretty soon, I was giving him rides to the gallery on a daily basis. When he wrecked his scooter, David and I started picking him up on Saturday nights when the mall closed. It wasn't long before we all became friends. I call him my brother in Christ.

Moussa identifies as Muslim, but he has been enjoying Sunday morning church services with us for a couple of months. When he begins his work as an architectural engineering student, I am going to miss his company!

Our gallery is a real community. Last month, one of our artists, Erin, lost her son. Logan was murdered while attending school at SWOSU. I started a Care Box at the suggestion of another artist. Nothing will replace the pain of losing him, but she knows we care. Items like a Mani/Pedi, goofy pillows, and a fuzzy blanket. Erin is starting to come back to work a little as she adjusts to life without Logan. Maybe we can surprise her with her favorite soda one day or something from the bakery.

Last week was a hard week. My pottery student, Sharon, called me with the news that her daughter, Miranda, living in New Zealand, had taken her life. Miranda was my pottery student while she taught art locally. She loved pottery classes and took part for years. Sometimes, she even attended both of my classes! She had a real passion for working with clay and glazes. David and I delivered food to Sharon and Eric prepared by the class. They are now planning a memorial service at our chapel with Sarah. Miranda was a Christian, a new one.

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Each day is an opportunity to help someone. Or donate your time to our food and clothing pantry. Make a difference in someone's life. I have found joy, not by searching for it, but by reaching out to others. I still miss my folks, but I take it one day at a time. I will continue to take a step forward. We all know that getting involved makes a difference. Sometimes, it's just taking an extra step forward.

Susan was born and raised in northern Virginia. She has been a member of FBC/OKC since her early teens, when she and her family moved to Oklahoma. She joined the church with her parents, Ray and Barbara Cromer. Susan taught elementary art in Putnam City Schools for 30 years. Currently, you can find her paintings and pottery on exhibit at Street Smarts Gallery and Art Central at Quail Springs Mall. Susan has been happily married to David for 21 years.

Joy in the Waiting

Penn Cline

When was your last waiting room experience? I've had some lengthy ones, especially visiting my heart physician. After checking in, one could read from a stack of magazines, watch a program on the flat screen, scroll through social media or just stare at the others waiting like me. But the wait was compulsory. No one in the room got around it and the delay was almost certainly longer than any of us would have liked. There's something in us that wants life to happen according to schedule, our schedule. But if that time passes and the wait becomes longer, what happens?



“Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah” (Luke 2:25-26).

How's that for a waiting room experience? Imagine waking up every day wondering if it will be today. How did he persevere through that?

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Was it because his devotion was rooted in the person with the plan more than the plan itself? Perhaps he didn't presume to have an opinion on the timetable or particulars – maybe he was able to treat them as the domain of divine sovereignty, joyfully content to see it all unfold before his eyes, confident that the one who promised would do just as He said, at the perfect time, and for the good of all who “have longed for his appearing” (2 Tim. 4:8).

What a gift it is in the season of the arrival of God's salvation through Simeon's eyes. We should want to wait well, as he did, full of assurance that the King will return just as he promised. He keeps his appointments. And on that day, we will depart in peace, joining a great cloud of witnesses, face-to-face with our salvation (Rev. 22:1-5).

As we reflect, we're invited to consider a different kind of waiting, the anticipation of an audience with the King of Kings. How does this shift in perspective deepen our understanding of waiting on God's timing and his promises in our lives?

Born in and living all my life in Oklahoma, raised by Christian parents, the Holy Spirit enabled me to totally trust Jesus with my life at an early age, but I wandered off on a prodigal path before coming back to the fold 30-plus years ago. With the love of my life, Brenda, we have been attending FBC OKC since April 2024, joining in November 2024. Two of my favorite verses are Romans 12:2 and 1 Peter 3:15. There are key truths people must believe to hold to the actual gospel. But belief is not just something you do with your brain. It's how you live your life. It is necessary for us all to evaluate ourselves to see if we are living lives consistent with what we say we believe. One of the commitments I've tried to carry is that I want to look at no one and treat no one that I come across as being beyond the possibility of redemption because I believe in the power of God's grace. Because of the Lord's grace and mercy, I'm so blessed with a Godly wife and to be a believer and follower of Jesus. Our God is so good!

Let the Joy In

Luke Stewart

This September, I traveled to Cincinnati with my mom and older brother. And it was really cool because Noah had never gone with us on our trips there. It was fun getting to show him all the cool stuff that I do there. Even though the hospital part isn't always fun, it made it a little more bearable knowing he was there. After the appointment, we came back to OKC, and life went on as usual.

I auditioned for a Willy Wonka production that our school was doing. A lot of my friends were auditioning, so I thought it would be fun to try myself.

One of the questions during the audition was, "Can you sing? If so, please sing something." I asked her what I should sing, and she started listing songs I could sing: Happy Birthday, Row, Row, Row your Boat, or Hamilton. I stopped her when she said "Hamilton" and started singing "You'll Be Back" from the soundtrack. It was a lot of fun, and a few days later, my parents got an email that said I got a part in the show! I was cast as Augustus Gloop. How very ironic, I got cast as the character who eats pretty much everything. As you can imagine, I was overfilled with joy about that (he says with a hint of sarcasm).

In one of the long, long, long rehearsals, we were on a break, and my mom walked into the theater with a smile on her face. She told me that the results from my biopsy had come back, and it was great news! We were going to add gluten to the list of foods that I can eat! I felt a little dizzy and sat down. I was with my friends, and the second that I told them, they started jumping up and down, screaming and hugging me. One of them accidentally said "glubbon" instead of "gluten" and we all started chanting "GLUBBON! GLUBBON!"

All these awesome things that God has given me in my life have given me a lot of joy. From my older brother, to singing Hamilton, to even "glubbon", God is working in ways that I could have never imagined. He's showing me that even in times when it seems like it's hopeless, there are always things to be thankful for. And having a thankful heart is the first step to letting joy into it.

Luke Stewart is a 7th grader at the Academy. He enjoys drama and was just recently in The Academy's production of Willy Wonka. He also loves playing D&D (Dungeons and Dragons) with his friends, video games, and hanging out with his family.



The Joy of the Lord

Cathy Manuel

When I said, "My foot is slipping, Lord," your unfailing love, Lord, supported me. When anxiety is great within me, your consolation brought me joy. Psalm 94:18-19.

This has been a very challenging year for me, especially physically. I've had 6 surgeries, one right after another. From back surgery to hip replacement, to shoulder surgery (twice). They were consuming my life. I know God was with me through it all. I was provided with wonderful family and friends that provided meals, emotional support and prayer, and transportation to Dr. appointments and Physical Therapy. As I got stronger, they took me to church. I remember the first time I was able to come to the church service. I felt such Joy as I sat in the pew on Sunday morning...overflowing joy when I sang hymns and choruses that mean so much to me (I even sang quietly with the choir). I was able to see friends I hadn't seen in a year. I felt Joy as I listened to Sarah preach in person, instead of online (although I'm very grateful for the streaming service online). It's been a crazy year for me, but it also brings me joy and hope when I realize that God was with me through it all. THE JOY OF THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH!

I have been a member of First Baptist Church for 25 years, and Oklahoma City is my hometown.

I have a wonderful dog named Gizzy who has been with me throughout this year, providing comfort and support. It's amazing to realize how God can give us Joy and comfort through our pets as well!



LOVE

The Love That Lets Go

Susan Curtiss

There was a season in my life when everything felt like it was running out: my time, money, energy, and even my hope. Well, who do I think I'm kidding? There have been *plenty* of those times where I felt stretched thin in every aspect of my life, attempting to "hold everything together," and feeling unable to escape the fear that "everything" was about to crumble around me.

Let the record reflect: I do not love this feeling.

Still, whenever this happens, by the grace of God, *eventually* I remember to Whom I have been created to turn for help: upon Whom my confidence rests.

"But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ."
Philippians 3:7

If you're in my Sunday school class you've undoubtedly heard me tie in this verse to my response to any number of discussion topics: some *arguably* unrelated. ;) Thing is, this verse is often top-of-mind because I need constant reminding that any/all the things that this world values and relies upon, instead of being in relationship with Jesus, are of no value compared to what is available to me when I live in and through the work of Jesus: sacrificially, generously, for the good of others.

During Advent, I am reminded *again* how Love came down not as a mighty king, but instead as a child: a baby. God's love was not delivered in grandeur, not in self-sufficient pride, but in vulnerability.

In a similar vein, Paul declares in Philippians 3:7 that his prior achievements, status, and earthly treasures are *nothing* compared to knowing Christ.

Love is not about what we can gain in this world. It's about what we are willing to give up. Paul had status, education, and respect; yet he willingly laid it all aside to follow, know, to love Jesus.



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That's the essence of Advent love: a love that lets go so it can fully hold onto Christ, and in turn reveal Jesus' love to others.

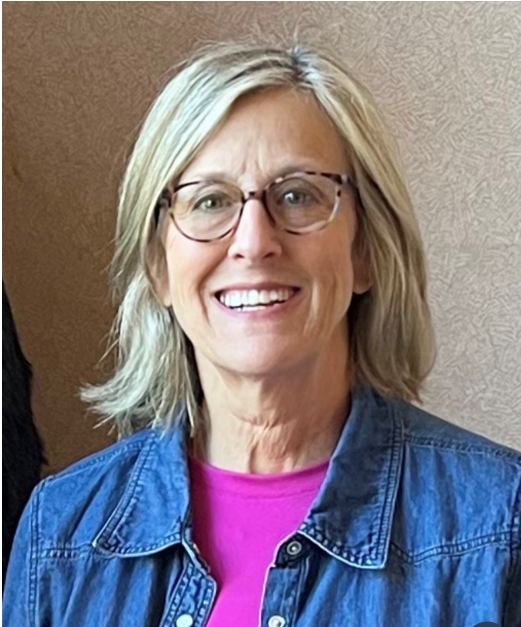
I'm so thankful for Advent's reminder to assess and release what all in this world I'm clinging to, that crowds Him out. By the grace of God, the love of Christ compels me to loosen my grip on the temporary, so I may cling to the eternal. Jesus modeled for us that love is not measured by what we keep, but by what we're willing to lose for the sake of others.

Susan and her husband, David, have been attending FBCOKC for six years. She is a local attorney in private practice, and founder and CEO a national Community for women attorneys in the U.S. She is deeply thankful for any and all opportunities she has to visit her adult children (who live all across the U.S.), running to relax, reading (esp. about the history of civil rights in the U.S.), wandering through art museums, and knitting things that can be made from a rectangle or square.

Love Like God Does

Teri Pennington

Love is wonderful, messy, and complicated. Is it a feeling, a choice, an



action? I thought love meant never giving up, that if we truly loved someone, we wouldn't give up on them or turn our back on them. If there were a problem, we'd figure out how to work through it. And then hard things in life happen. I see the people I love and thought loved me act in ways I can't comprehend. I realize my version of love doesn't match theirs. It crushes my soul; it almost breaks me. But I don't walk alone.

Learning to let go of my expectations of what a family should look like, or my idea of what relationships with parents, siblings, children, and even friends should be like, is a start. It's not an easy thing to do, to let go of

my expectations. I'm learning to change my way of thinking and accepting, and to let people be who they are. Surprisingly, it's given me a clearer view of how much God loves me, faults and all.

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I've been studying the book of Daniel lately. He had a hard road to walk. God chose him to be the "bearer of bad news" to his people. God told Daniel what the consequences would be for all the Israelites if they didn't turn back to him. They wouldn't listen. They wanted their own way. They forgot how much God loved them. He'd always been with them, got them through hard times or out of trouble (usually a result of their own choices). Daniel loved his people deeply. It broke his heart to see how they had turned away from God.

Daniel took his eyes off himself and prayed for all the people he loved, and even when they behaved badly, he didn't give up on them. He continued to love them and pray for them. **I want to love like Daniel did.**

It's hard to really comprehend how much God loves us. Even if we choose not to love him back, he won't turn his back on us or walk away. He will always love us. He will always be waiting for a relationship with us. **I want to love like God does.**

We are precious to God. **I want to love others, so they feel like that!**

Teri was born in Honolulu, Hawaii, but unfortunately doesn't remember it. She and her husband David, moved to OKC 7 years ago from Ponca City. They started watching FBCOKC online when COVID hit, and they became members in 2022. They have 4 children and 4 grandchildren (she misses them terribly), all living in different states. Teri loves finding ways to help at church, having friends over, painting, gardening, walking, and her kitty.

As A Child

Valerie Bowen

It is staggeringly easy to find my heart far from God, even as I attend church, facilitate Bible lessons, or sing worship songs with my kids. My awareness of God's nearness dulls amidst performing everyday routines. One of those routines is reading the Bible before bed with our two toddlers. At the end of our story one night, our three-year-old, Torrance, asked unsolicited, "Would Jesus pick me up?"

Often, we tell our sons that Jesus loves them, that He died for us, and rose again. But Torrance wanted to know how Jesus would approach him, engage with him, treat him.

When Torrance asked if Jesus would pick him up, I discerned an invitation to imagine Christ's love for me the same way. To let the understanding of His love go beyond intellectual rehearsal of the words "Jesus loves me" into a personal, experiential reality of that love. Do I believe that Jesus would lovingly take me in His arms, amidst my failures or even my child-like resistance? Can I even imagine such an encounter?

Jesus Himself did this very thing in Mark 10. Despite the disciples' thinking it was inappropriate for parents to bring their children to Jesus, Jesus "took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them, and blessed them" (v 16). As Jesus did this, He said we all must become like children to enter His kingdom (v 15). God becoming human in Christ affirms the tangible reality of His love and nearness. He came to make us His children, and His children we are.

Do you believe Jesus wants to take *you* in his arms, place his hand on you, and bless you? This is a question I've been led to ponder as a means to draw my heart back into the awareness of Christ's love this Advent season.

"Praise the Lord; praise God our savior! For each day he carries us in his arms." Psalm 68:19

Valerie has been attending FBCOKC for over two years now. She worked in international missions for six years before moving here and now stays at home full time with her boys, Torrance (3) and Isaac (1), with another boy on the way in February. She loves to cook and bake, exercise, and study the Bible. Her recent hobby has been milling her own grains for sourdough baking.



Merry Christmas
&
Happy New Year
From the FBCOKC Staff



December Events

December 3 Annual Business Meeting
December 12 Elementary Christmas Party
December 13 Littles Christmas Party
December 14 Sounds of the Season
December 16 Rooted Holiday Cookies & Bingo
December 19-20 Youth Christmas Party Lock-In
December 21 Christmas Feast
December 24 Christmas Eve Service

FBCOKC Staff

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

