



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF EDMOND

FIRST LOOK

MARCH 2021



FEATURE ARTICLE:

Journey to the Cross

Micro-groups are a great way to examine our hearts as we anticipate the celebration of Easter

MINISTRY HIGHLIGHT:
ENDOWMENT FUND

**MARCH
ANNOUNCEMENTS**

VISION MOMENT

Journey to the Cross

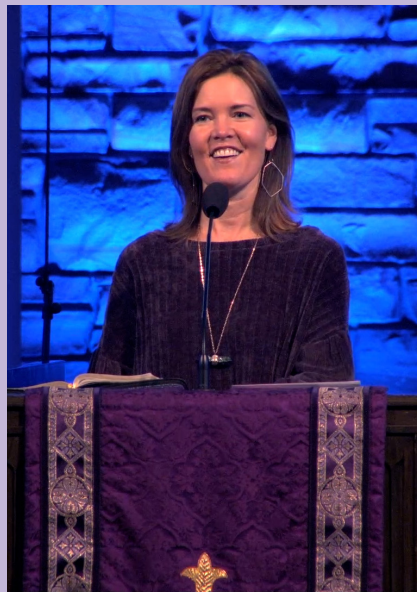
By: Kyle Owen, Director of Music and Worship Arts

Nearly 12 months ago we all dove head-first into the storm of COVID-19. I know we may not want to acknowledge it, but as we have all been shifting and adapting, the storm around us continues to move. It may seem odd to say, but this season of life that we have been in is the perfect opportunity to grow as worshippers.

We now find ourselves in the season of Lent, again, during this storm. You may be thinking, Yep... I've got a lot to confess and repent after what has felt to some like a whole year of lamenting. That is a little "tongue and cheek." It has been long, and we do have a lot to bring to God after this past year. But it's okay. Let's be honest and move forward into the joy that we can find in Jesus.

As a community we are turning our focus during this season of Lent towards Jesus. Journeying to the cross, with Jesus. Recognizing our weakness and trusting God to help us grow through this time. Jesus is the perfect example of what it means to worship through difficult things. In Hebrews 4 we are reminded that "...we do not have a High-priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness" and assures "through Jesus, God is intimately present in our weaknesses to point us to God's promises." Jesus knows what it is to be tempted and tried but always knew his Father was present.

Jump back with me to where we started out here. The reason this season of life is a perfect opportunity to grow as a worshipper is because at one point or another it



Daily prayer services are livestreamed at noon Monday - Friday during the season of Lent, led by our Session of Elders (Amy & Ben Reid featured above)

has brought ALL of us to a breaking point. A point where all we could do was stop...and acknowledge our need for a Savior. Stop...and give thanks for who God is and what he has done. Stop...and recognize that the things that we 'do' do not impact the amount of grace and love freely given to us by God. Stop...and remember that the very Son of God himself sympathizes with us and acts as a bridge between God and humanity. That – is why this is a perfect season to grow as a worshipper. Worship is about remaining still and looking to Jesus as the storms around us keep moving.

Sometimes that is easier said than done, but that is where community comes in. God has given us each other, and through this season we want to pray together - bring our weakness and find strength in the Father together, lean into the grace of Jesus together. Stop...in the middle of the storm and worship together. As we do this, I believe with all my heart that we will find an incredible freedom in the Father. We are taking time at noon each day during Lent (except for Saturdays) to pray together via livestream and also live in the sanctuary if you wish. This time

out each day is something we can do together though we still may be separated by social distance.

As we dive into Pastor Eric's Lenten Devotional titled "Freedom in the Father," the hope is that we will regain a taste of that community that we had grown so accustomed to as part of our daily lives before the pandemic. We encourage you to share the daily devotionals with a micro-group of your closest friends and/or neighbors, make a time to discuss your experience with the readings, and pray together.

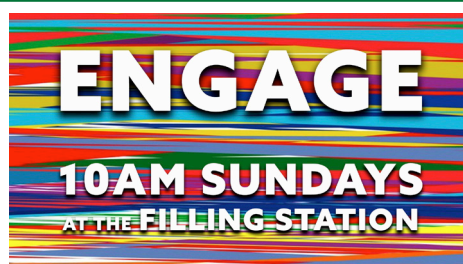
This year, the hope of Easter looms larger than ever! We are hopeful that Easter will be a great marker of freedom from the pandemic as mass amounts of vaccines continue to be distributed and the fear of Covid is losing its grip over us. Resurrection is all about new life and can't wait to celebrate that new life with you!

We are praying for you and longing for the day we can all fully be together in worship. We are almost there! Remain still in the storm and look to Jesus as you grow as a worshipper. We love you!

CÉSAR CHÁVEZ FOOD PANTRY



The elementary children at César Chávez are in great need of: Chef Boyardee products, Ramen noodles, Mac-n-cheese, and breakfast drinks. The OKC Food Bank has not made a delivery since November, so they truly need the basic necessities to stay focused on their education. During the recent ice and snow-magedden, because of FPCE, César Chávez was able to provide for 7 families who were in a completely desperate state – without water, electricity, and food. Thank you for answering HIS call! Matthew 25:35



ENGAGE!

We are continuing to enjoy our weekly opportunity to join together called ENGAGE! Each Sunday at **10am** at the **Filling Station** (which is the landing above the gym), families are invited to meet together with other families and enjoy a time of fellowship. This is a great time to begin meeting as a micro-group with some other families or individuals. We hope you will make the most of this time & space that is available. *Please note that Engage will not meet on either Sunday the week of spring break - March 14th & March 21st.*



FRIDAY MORNING MEN'S GROUP

7AM • ROOM 2115
EVERY FRIDAY MORNING



New Wednesday Night Class Offering coming March 10

Lead Pastor Eric Laverentz will be teaching an 8-week class on Wednesday Nights at 6:00pm called, "The Biblical Roots of the Civil Rights Movement." The class will examine the deep Scriptural influence that paved the way for the Civil Rights movement in this country and ask "What can the Church learn today from the Black Church of the 50's and 60's?" The class will feature readings, videos, and talks by Pastor Eric, as well as discussion. Pastor Eric did his graduate work at Princeton Theological Seminary and Vanderbilt in the Civil Rights movement. Participation can be either in person or online. Registration is required for planning. A \$10 donation for a book of readings will help defray the cost for everyone.

The class will meet every other Wednesday: **March 10, March 24, April 7, April 14, April 21, April 28, May 5, and May 12**

Register today, and bring a friend!



PICK UP YOUR COPY
OF OUR
**LENTEN
DEVOTIONAL
BOOK**
IN PRINT OR ONLINE

**START YOUR OWN
MICRO-GROUP TODAY!**

Pastor Eric is preaching a new sermon series called **Teach Us To Pray** during Lent. One way to lean into this sermon series on the Lord's Prayer is to form a micro-group. We are providing you with a 40-day devotional book with questions based on the sermon series titled Freedom in the Father. We also have some brief training videos available that you can watch for ongoing support. *What it really takes is the courage to ask 2 or 3 people to join you and then commit to live out our 7 Core Practices with them.* We would love it if you would let us know that you are already leading a group or if you would like to begin one so we can support and pray for you. Please email Lesli Womack at lwomack@fpcedmond.org. It's not too late to start your micro-group!



March Menus:

- 3/3 Frito chili pie
- 3/10 Chicken enchiladas
- 3/17 no meeting
- 3/24 Penne pasta with beef
- 3/31 Chicken and sausage gumbo

**No small groups or dinner on
March 17th due to Spring Break**

Wednesday Night Gathering

Come to the **Great Hall** on **Wednesdays** from **5:15-5:45pm** for a complete "home-cooked" meal: \$6/person, or \$24 maximum/family. *To reserve your place, call the church office (341-3602) by Monday at 5:00pm each week.* Classes for all ages will be held from 6-7:30pm following the meal. Kids Ministry will meet in Miracle Movies, and Student Ministry will meet in their small groups.

FIRST, BY THE NUMBERS

- Giving in January of 2020: \$231,295.74
- Giving in January of 2021: \$303,227.45 (up 31%)
- FPCE has been delivering food to César Chávez Elementary School monthly since October of 2020
- We average 800lbs of food items each month, coming to over 4,000lbs of food donated so far!
- An additional 100lbs of food was donated and delivered to 58 individual students' homes over the Christmas break by members of our own FPCE Food Pantry Task Force
- An average of 75 kids and students (combined) attend Wednesday Night small groups
- Our After School program started in 2017, bringing in over 240 students through our doors since then.



CREATE & SEND LEADERS: Jake McKinnon is going to Bonhomme Pres!

Jake McKinnon grew up at FPCE, involved in the Student Ministry since the 8th grade, moved to small group leader, intern, then After School Coordinator. One of our 7 Core Practices is to Create and Send Leaders, and it's bittersweet to announce Jake has accepted the position of Director of Student Ministries at Bonhomme Presbyterian Church in St. Louis. We are so proud of Jake and will celebrate him at LIFT **Wednesday, March 10th** from **6-7:30pm**. We would like to shower Jake and Hannah (his fiancé) with love that night, and if you would like to send him off with love please drop off gifts in the front office (during business hours), maybe gift them with something your family loves, a gift card, or a note of encouragement. We will miss you, Jake!

MINISTRY HIGHLIGHT Endowment Fund

by: Paul M Thomson, Ph.D.

President, FPCE Board of Trustees

"The future ain't what it used to be" as predicted by the Everyman philosopher, Yogi Berra. Amen to that, and given what has happened during the last year, who could have said a COVID pandemic would be visited upon us. But here we are.

In 2015 our Session saw the need to be prepared financially to undertake new ministries, under circumstances fair or foul, and directed the establishment of an endowment program for that purpose. The program is overseen by a board of seven trustees appointed by the Session whose mission is to educate the congregation on the ways of giving that will build a foundation of support for future ministries.

Endowment giving is unlike annual giving in that money is invested rather than put to use for current programming and operations. Earnings from the



investments are available to underwrite any new programs. Because only the earnings are used, as the principal grows, so grow the earnings.

Endowments increase in value through investment but more so by contributions. The program is open to contributions at any time in any amount, but most gifts are designated through estate plans. Remembering the Church in preparing one's will or trust is the usual way, but there are others as described with examples in a brochure entitled "Ways of Giving" available from the church upon request.

Our Executive Pastor, Todd Cooper, any of the trustees whose names are listed in the brochure,

and I are willing to assist you and your attorney in preparing a gift. You can contact us by calling the church office.

Yogi of course enjoyed having fun with words, but his message is clear. The future is as near as tomorrow. But if we prepare now to be that church, the endowment will underwrite our future no matter what "it used to be".



Paul and Marilyn Thomson