



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF EDMOND

FIRST LOOK

NOVEMBER 2020

FEATURE ARTICLE:
New Life for the world

Hope Force

Brian Wagner and Hope Force International
show up when the going gets tough

MINISTRY HIGHLIGHT:
**CHRISTMAS
IS COMING!**

**NOVEMBER
ANNOUNCEMENTS**

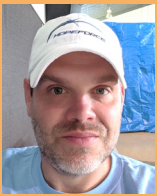


VISION MOMENT

Are You Ready to Serve Survivors of Distaster?

By: Carol Hartzog

Brian Wagner doesn't just talk "disaster response," he's lived it, not only for himself but for his wife and his two then-elementary age children. They lived for just over a year in McDowell County, W. Va., which is one of the poorest counties in the United States, has the highest drug addiction and overdose rates in West Virginia, and has the highest levels of poverty in the state.



Brian Wagner

His focus was and continues to be on building relationships and connections with the West Virginia residents for Hope Force International. But Hope Force's mission is much, bigger -- to deploy its 2,500 trained reservists from around the country and world to disaster areas within 24-48 hours.

Brian does that too. He is part of the nonprofit organization's assessment team, so he is first on the ground at disasters.

He has recently returned to his Edmond home from Hurricane Delta-ravaged Lake Charles, La., which had been hit by Hurricane Laura less than two months previous. In Laura, they tarped roofs for 115 homes.

"Every tarp was hit by 100 mph winds in Delta, and our tarps after Laura all stayed on. We provide what's going to last," he said. Providing "what lasts" is larger than material help. They provide the love of Jesus.

That's one reason why Hope Force International is our church's newest mission partner -- to bring Christ to the World. The church has committed 5 percent of its mission

budget to the ministry: \$6000 in 2020 and \$14,000 in 2021.

But it's not just a financial partnership. Brian will be working with FPCE to form and train several "Reservist" emergency response teams. He will be working with our staff to organize summer mission opportunities for families and students to West Virginia and has offered his services to preach occasionally from our pulpit.

He has served Hope Force since 2009, as a trained Reservist and a staff member. No one involved in Hope Force is paid. All raise their own support.

"The majority of our Reservists are retired. Because Hope Force is very intentional about coming alongside with hope, our primary pathway in is to come along side and grieve beside the victims," he said. "Anyone who is breathing can show the love of Jesus. Some Reservists can only pick up a little trash, but all of them can enter into a life of someone who has experienced disaster and reveal to them the love of Jesus, by simply sitting with someone had having coffee and a conversation."

The two-and-a-half-day Reservist training focuses on the grief and trauma cycle, personal wholeness, and healthy team dynamics. (www.hope-force.org). Hope Force's approach is to bring compassion in action.

"A natural disaster causes you to lose your breath, as in trauma and grief. We provide emotional and spiritual care, in flood events, mucking out a house of mud and mold, or in wind events, tarping. FEMA actually uses us as an example. Our hope is to help people 'catch their breath again.'"

Due to its small size and its ability to mobilize quickly, Hope Force can provide "intel" and relationships on the ground when the larger organizations, such as 15-year partners Salvation Army and Samaritan's Purse, come on the scene.

Hope Force International has stay-

ing power. In 1993, Hope Force was founded by Jack and Cherie Minton, with Jack stepping out from Executive Director of Operations for Mercy Ships, a massive organization which sends hospital ships filled with volunteer professionals who provide surgeries to people in need. Jack and Cherie remain at the helm of the organization.

Brian has a long relationship with our church. Twenty years ago he was hired as our Middle Director before heading off to seminary. Ten years ago, he was recruited back to be our Director of Emerging Generations and Community Response, which he served for five years. He served as Family Life Pastor from 2016-2020 in Connecticut.

In January, he made the leap to full-time with Hope Force, moving back to centrally located Edmond, where he can serve in a moment's notice the Plains states region -- tornado alley. This is in addition to his role as director of Hope Force West Virginia.

Through his West Virginia connections, he can bring in teams during the summer. The volunteers weatherize homes so they remain stay dry and safe as the majority of homes are jeopardized because of lack of care and systemic poverty. In the summers, from his former McDowell County home, he is able to connect the larger service organizations to the area "to help them fall in love with the people and county as we have."

"For me, in disaster relief, you really see the presence of God at work. The reason I engaged with it in West Virginia and here is you see God at work in the midst of heartache. My goal is to get as close to Him in the midst of that and be used by Him for His glory. I view myself as an instrument in the Redeemer's hand. I am willing to follow God into the mess to be used by Him to serve others."

FPCE | KIDS Take Out

The November FPCE|Kids Take Out box is ready and available for pick up at the Welcome desk! This month there is a special focus of *gratitude* throughout the Take Out activities. Parents can engage in scripturally-based lessons and crafts with their children if they are not ready to come back to church on Sunday mornings or Wednesday Nights. This is just one way that our Kids Ministry is meeting our congregation where they are. We hope kids & parents will be blessed!



Stewardship Campaign

Our Stewardship Campaign titled, "Our Rock in the Storm" is well underway! Not counting dollar amounts, but instead emphasizing individual estimates of giving cards, we encourage everyone who considers FPCE their church home to return an estimate card by **Sunday, November 15th**. Digital estimate cards can be found on our app or our website. We hope you will be blessed to consider your own commitment for 2021.



LET US GIVE THANKS

Our Annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner is available

BY PICK UP ONLY

at UCO's George Nigh Center
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
on **Thanksgiving Day**
Thursday, November 26, 2020



SPONSORED BY EDMOND, OKLAHOMA CHURCHES

Kids Ministry and Student Ministry would love for you to update your contact information if you have had any changes in 2020. For **Kids**, contact **Danielle** at djones@fpcedmond.org, or **Students** contact **Alyssa** at adees@fpcedmond.org.

The FOOTSTEPS of JESUS WEEKEND EXPERIENCE

NOVEMBER 6 & 7

Register online or the app
Childcare available

Bob Rognlien, Holy Land guide and scholar, will be returning to FPCE for a **Footsteps of Jesus Weekend Experience** on **November 6 & 7**. This will be an incredible opportunity to experience the life of Jesus like you never have before! Incorporating archaeology, history, and the Bible, this journey will take us from Jesus' birth in Bethlehem to his death and resurrection in Jerusalem. The next best thing to traveling to Israel is experiencing the sights and history through this amazing event. Bob will share pictures and videos alongside his outstanding teaching. You can register online or on our app and can attend in person or watch via live stream; however, registration is required to participate. This is a one-time event and is for everyone, so don't delay – register today!

The Gathering FPCE WEDNESDAY NIGHTS

November Menus:

- 11/4 Soup and grilled cheese
- 11/11 King Ranch chicken casserole
- 11/18 Meatloaf w/ potato casserole

Final fall meeting is November 18

Wednesday Night Gathering

Tired of take-out meals? 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 on the playground, and Student Ministry will meet drive-in style in the back parking lot behind the gym. Come join us!



Operation Christmas Child

Christmas is coming early this year! We need your help to get Operation Christmas Child boxes to kids in need of some Christmas spirit! This year we have made our goal 300 boxes. We would love for you to "adopt a box" or two or three. *There is no need to buy the shoe boxes... Operation Christmas Child cardboard boxes have already been delivered to the church.* We just need to fill them. You can find them in the Great Hall every Sunday and at the front desk Monday through Friday from 9am to noon. Please come by and pick up a box and fill it up with goodies. Return your boxes by **Sunday, November 15th** to the table in the Great Hall. If you have any questions please email Danielle at djones@fpcedmond.org.



Peace on Earth

CHRISTMAS 2020

All details coming soon on

CHRISTMAS **4** EDMOND.COM

Seek Peace

*Advent Devotional
2020*



AVAILABLE
NOVEMBER 29

Share Peace



JOIN US
IN SUPPORTING
OUR
COMMUNITY
PARTNERS!

Find Peace

CHRISTMAS NIGHT OF WORSHIP
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11
IN THE SANCTUARY, THE FRONT YARD, OR ONLINE

- FOOD TRUCKS & FELLOWSHIP
BEGIN AT 5:30PM
- MISSION DROPOFF
- INVITE YOUR NEIGHBORS
& FRIENDS



Receive Peace

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE
IN PERSON
AND ONLINE

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24

