Today I feel God reminding me to count my blessings and perhaps we all need that reminder. I remember my mom teaching me from a young age that life is what you put into it. If you go in with a bad attitude and low expectations, then you will get what you were looking for. That has been true at every stage of my life. College is what you make of it, seminary is what you make of it, marriage or ministry is all what you put into it. If you give it your all, look for the good, walk in humility and gratitude, the sky is the limit! God is at work all around us, my friends. Don’t let the doom and gloom that we hear all the time define how you live your life.

I will start. Today I am grateful for this church that shows up when life is hard. I am thankful for access to medical care for my family. I am grateful for a strong healthy deacon body. We have 13 deacons who love God and love this church so well. They are level headed and wise and the Lord is using each of these men and women to minister to our congregation. I am eternally grateful for Jesus Christ who came to save us from our sins and to set us free. I am grateful for the grace I find in our faith community when life is hard and when we fail. Grace abounds.

What about you? What are you thankful for today?

This season of life is weird and difficult but it’s also full of unexpected gifts from God. Look for them and recognize them. What a gift it is to worship in person! We will never take that for granted again. What a gift it is to wake up and face another day with hope because our God reigns! What if this year is the thing that God will use to radically propel the Kingdom of God forward? Maybe this year is a reminder to all of us that our time here on earth is short and we need to give it all we’ve got to be a radical life.

Sarah
**Puzzles**

Our family is on a puzzle kick right now and it’s serious stuff. I, with a lot of help, just completed a thousand-piece puzzle of a beautiful scene of street café in Paris. Sarah would say I was completely obsessed and she’s right. One night I put Noah to bed and started working on the puzzle. Five minutes later, Noah came out crying. I asked him what was wrong and he confessed to hiding one of my puzzle pieces in his bed as a joke. But now he couldn’t find it and he was worried I would be mad at him. Father of the year right here! I reassured him of my love and we laughed together as I secretly tried to figure out which puzzle piece he had taken. We found the piece the next morning so the crisis was averted.

Puzzles are so detail-oriented and the details are so small it can be easy to miss them. Just one speck of color can clue you in to where a piece belongs. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if you could just take a puzzle out of the box and immediately know where every piece fits? You have a vision and just know how it all fits together without the tedious process of sorting, studying the picture on the box, and working through the process. Ever felt like that about your life? You wish you could just dump out all the pieces onto the table and put everything in its right place. No trial and error, no mismatched pieces, no waiting for the picture to take shape, no mistakes, no surprises. Your best-laid plans fall perfectly into place. But of course that’s not how puzzles work and it’s not how life works either. I read “Jayber Crow”, a novel by Wendell Berry, earlier this year. I keep thinking about this quote:

*Often I have not known where I was going until I was already there. I have had my share of desires and goals, but my life has come to me or I have gone to it mainly by way of mistakes and surprises. Often I have received better than I deserved. Often my fairest hopes have rested on bad mistakes. I am an ignorant pilgrim, crossing a dark valley. And yet for a long time, looking back, I have been unable to shake off the feeling that I have been led - make of that what you will.”*

Maybe you feel like your life, especially right now in the midst of the pandemic, is chaotic, unpredictable, scary, or even falling apart. But I want you to entertain the possibility that even in the midst of all the uncertainty and pain, God is with you and guiding you. Even when you’re prone to believe otherwise. Hindsight is always 20/20; looking back on our lives we see ways that God showed his presence that we couldn’t see at the time. Before the puzzle begins to take shape, all you can see is fragments. Broken pieces that don’t fit together. But against all hope, the picture begins to emerge. If all you can see is broken pieces right now, don’t give up. He, the God of all creation, has begun a good work in you and He will not stop until the work is done and the masterpiece is complete. Our present suffering – and let us acknowledge the very real pain we and our neighbors are experiencing in this moment – is nothing compared to the glory yet to be revealed in us through the power of Jesus Christ.

*Brad*

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**Love** FBCOKC: We are so blessed to have this wonderful and enormous facility as a church. For the past year we have had a book in the Commons available for you to use as a way to let us know when something needs attention. It is now located just outside the office. If you see a light out or something non-urgent that needs repair, please put it in the book. Lonnie Stearns, our Facilities Manager, checks the book daily and will update the book with notes as he and his crew work hard to maintain this beautiful church. Thank you for helping us!
Loving Our Community This Summer

During recent months, many people have been asking how we can help to serve our community. One of the ways has been the continued service of food distribution through CareForOKC.

Blood Drive

On August 16th, we will be hosting the American Red Cross for a community-wide blood drive. It will be from 9a-3p in our Dining Hall. If you’d like to donate blood, we would love it if you would make plans to donate on the 16th.

School Supply Drive

This month, we are collecting school supplies for 2 local schools: Thelma Parks Elementary in East OKC and Positive Tomorrows! We want to help ensure that each classroom is equipped with enough school supplies to start the school year. We are partnering with Restore Schools in this effort. You can find a generalized list of supplies that you can buy and bring to the church. Or, you can buy from a specified Amazon list and they’ll be shipped directly to Restore Schools, who will ensure that they are delivered to the schools before the first day of school. You can find that list here: https://amzn.to/3fk6fTo

Feel free to drop off your school supplies at the church before August 2nd, and we’ll make sure they’re to the schools before the first day of class on August 10th. Thank you for helping love our community so well!

All the information you may need can be found on our church website at: www.fbcokc.org/schools

Pencil Boxes  Composition Book  Wipes  Folders
Crayola Crayons  Glue Sticks  3x5 Index Cards  Folders with Brads
Construction Paper  Bottle of Glue  Wide-Ruled Filler Paper  Dry Erase Markers
Crayola Markers  Colored Pencils  Highlighters  Pink Erasers
Wide rule Spiral Notebook  Ruler  Paper Towels  Hand Sanitizer
Scissors

Bylaw revisions and Deacon Policies and Procedures are available in a packet in the Commons. Please review.
**Walk Through the Psalms w/Aaron & Grace Ogburn**

During the month of July, you have the opportunity to walk through the Psalms and get a glimpse into their work as Bible translators. Grace and her colleagues will be working through the Psalms, translating them into 3 East African languages. They will go through each of the 150 Psalms making sure they’re ready to go to print. You can journey along with them through Grace’s daily reflections on their work. We hope you’ll join in!

To learn more about this project, you can watch a short video at: [https://vimeo.com/428483087](https://vimeo.com/428483087)

To sign up for these daily reflections, you can sign-up here: [http://eepurl.com/cmnFQP](http://eepurl.com/cmnFQP)

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If you are unable to view our services & sermons online, either during the live stream or on-demand later in the week, and would like a copy, please let the church office know. We can burn a copy of the sermon onto a CD for you to listen to at your convenience.

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We are getting a beautiful new electronic sign for outside the church! This has been a dream for years and we are so happy it is going to happen soon. The sign is only possible because our beloved friend Linda Staples left an incredibly generous gift to the church in her passing. The sign will be done in her honor. If you would like to contribute to the cost of the masonry for the sign, we would be most grateful. Any amount we get beyond our need will go to replenishing the reserve account. Thank you so much to those who have already given. You can give online through our website or mark your offering envelopes to reflect you intention to give to the sign. It is so exciting to see all the ways God is leading us into a bright and hopeful future as the Lighthouse on the Corner.

*Sarah*
Please enter from Harvey Street and drive through to the carport at the Hobbs Bldg. We will have a little surprise for you also.......... Thanks
The Mission Committee

**FBCOKC Ministers**

- **Sarah Stewart**, Pastor
- **Andrew Bowles**, Minister of Students and Missions
- **Brad Stewart**, Minister of Discipleship
- **Steven McConnell**, Minister of Music
- **Don Clothier**, Pianist
- **Ariel Koerner**, Praise Leader
- **Jordan Browne**, Children’s Coordinator
FBCOKC  Latest Reopening Update:

Friends, after much prayer, listening to our leadership, and looking at the rising number of Covid-19 cases we have decided to move forward with caution. Here is our updated plan:

**Phase 1 and 2:**

- We will continue Sunday morning Bible Study at 9:15am and Worship at 10:30am. All doors to the church will be open. Our Worship attendance has been between 55-90 people each week. Bible Study attendance is much lower.

- We will continue to offer our worship services online every week. There may come a time later in the year our city has to “Shelter in Place” again. If that happens, we are prepared. (Hopefully that won’t be necessary!)

- Masks are **required** as well as social distancing and hand washing. This will always be our best strategy.

- The Church office remains closed to visitors throughout the summer. We love parking lot visits and meeting in the dining hall! Committee meetings will continue to meet in the dining hall.

**Phase 3:**

**Wednesday night activities will not resume until at least September.** We will continue to offer Midweek Devotionals through Facebook Live each week. We hope these have been a blessing to you.

Our July Business Meeting has been postponed.

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**Children’s News**

Covid-19 Update for FBCOKC: For at least the next two weeks, the nursery at FBCOKC will be closed. This includes Sunday School and Giggles. Feel free to contact the church office for more information.

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**COMMUNITY CARE OFFERING** will be taken directly after the service this Sunday, August 2 to care for the needs of our community. Thank you

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FBCOKC—Come be YOU with US!