

April 2026

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FIRST CONNECT

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*Photo courtesy of Ariel Koerner
"North Windows Reflection on Piano"*

LETTER FROM SARAH



Dear friends, what a gift you are to the world. You shine like stars in the night sky. I watch as you each walk your own path in life, following Jesus with fear and faith mixed together. I watch as you lean on Jesus when life feels so very heavy, and I watch you give glory to God for the seasons of joy when they come. I see how you serve the Lord in a thousand ways every day. You live with generosity, both in your support of the church and in your grace for one another. You are the church. I am honored to be a part of

what God is doing in and through you in this season. I am reminded of what C.S. Lewis describes in *The Four Loves*. He wrote, “We are mirrors whose brightness, if we are bright, is wholly derived from the sun that shines on us.” The closer you walk with the Lord, the brighter the light shines.

When I look around at our church family, I can’t help but feel that this is a taste of heaven. This is what it means that the Kingdom of God has come here and now in some small ways. The Kingdom of God is any place where the people of God are living according to the heart of God and in communion with God. When we strive to live the way Jesus taught us to live and as we abide in him, we are bringing the kingdom here one moment at a time. That’s the only explanation I can come up with for the beauty of this church family. We are not perfect, but our hearts belong to Jesus, and we remain teachable. We want to see Jesus more than anything.

In John’s Gospel, right after Jesus’s ride into Jerusalem, there were some Greeks there who had come to the Passover to worship. They went to Philip, one of the disciples, and said, “Sir, we want to see Jesus.” So, Philip went to get Andrew, and the two of them went to tell Jesus. We want to see Jesus. That’s what we all want. Isn’t that exactly what the church should be? A place where people come who want to see Jesus, and it is our joy and honor to help them see Jesus for themselves.

As we walk through this Holy Week, may we let the light of Christ shine out of us. May we show up with hope and anticipation for all God is going to do through our Easter Sunday worship service. May we continue to dive down deep into God’s word through Sunday morning Bible Studies and grow in our faith as we live in community in our small groups. May we learn to give generously to God because he’s been so generous with us. And may this church be a safe harbor for those in a storm. A lighthouse on the corner. Blessings to you, dear friends. God is good and he is with you.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Good Friday, April 3rd

Join us in the Sanctuary at 6pm for a reflective worship service around the cross and how it shapes our devotion to Jesus.

Easter Sunday, April 5th

An all-church breakfast begins at 9:00am in the Fellowship Hall! We will gather in the Sanctuary at 10:30am as we celebrate the Risen Christ! No Bible study that day! A donation of \$10 is requested.

April 6th

The church office and CareforOKC will be closed.

Rick's Café, April 12th

Do you have any questions about the Bible, faith, or what it means to follow Jesus in our world?

Rick Johnson, a seminary professor and member of FBCOKC, will be hosting "Rick's Cafe" in the Parlor at 6:00pm. Come with your questions for Rick as we learn and grow together in faith! Childcare available.

KOB Auditions, April 12th

If your kid would like a drama or solo for the Kids Off Broadway performance, the auditions will be Sunday, April 12th at 1pm in the Commons. You do not have to audition to be part of KOB, only if you would like a specialized role. You do not need to prepare anything. We will have the kids sing a simple, well known song and read part of the script. If you are interested in auditions, please let Ariel know.

Bright Music, April 14th

Come here beautiful music at 7:30pm in the Sanctuary. They will be performing Cello Celebration with guest artist, Sophie Shao. You will hear works from Bach, Ruehr, Marcello, Wiancko, Popper, and Klengel. Tickets sold at the door.

CareforOKC Work Day, April 18th

Come join us from 10am–1pm for a work day in our clothing closet.

Mission Trip to Harlingen, TX – Week of May 18

We will be taking a small mission team to south Texas to complete work on a house we began last October with Elket Rodriguez, one of FBCOKC's mission partners. We will be doing installation of a bathroom toilet, shower, and sink. We will also be installing flooring and doing some interior painting. This opportunity to serve came to us last week unexpectedly, so we are still in the process of confirming dates and plans! The trip will be 4-5 days.

If you are interested in joining us or want more information, email bradstewart@fbcokc.org.

RECENT EVENTS



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Easter
Egg
Hunt



Youth hiding the eggs

KIDS AND YOUTH



KOB Auditions, April 12th

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Kid's Night Out, April 24th

April 24th is National Help Animals Day! We will meet in the Gym at 6pm for dinner and free play. Then we will decorate collars and leashes to take to an animal shelter for newly adopted pets! We will finish our evening in the kid's area with a movie and pick up is at 9pm. If your kids are interested in coming, please let Ariel know.

KOB Volunteers

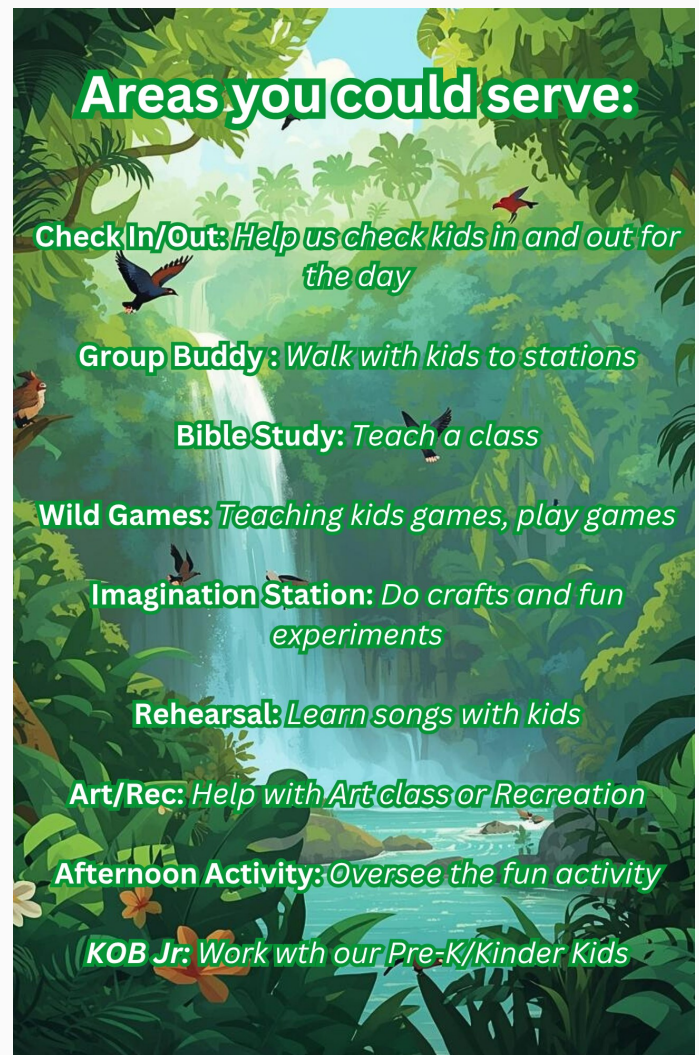
Are you interested in being a volunteer for Kids Off Broadway? It's June 8-12 and this is an all-hands-on-deck event!

If you don't know what KOB is, it is our version of VBS. We have a week long camp and we have kids from 4 years old to 18 years old in our building. We learn songs, have bible study, loads of fun, and build relationships.

I need volunteers for the week and there are so many places you could volunteer. If working with kids isn't your strong suit, maybe you help prep lunch or maybe you are better with younger kids, so you help in KOB Jr. There are many areas you can serve.

My big areas are in the mornings. From 9-12 each day the kids are doing rotations and I need 8 adults to help facilitate those rotations (4 teaching and 4 as a group buddy). If you can spare 3 hours of your mornings to help, please let me know.

I have a volunteer table set in the Commons and I will be there after church each week if you have any questions about volunteering or KOB in general.



If you see this, email Toni Adams at tadams@fbcokc.org. The first person to email her will get a prize!

MISSIONS



Missionary Focus for April 2026 – Elket Rodriguez

For the remainder of 2026, we will be highlighting one or two of our mission partners each month! This will give our congregation the ability to focus our prayers, learn about what God is doing through our partners, and discover how we can invest in the Kingdom work already taking place. God is moving and we want you to hear these stories. For the month of April, we are focusing on Elket Rodriguez!

Elket Rodriguez is the Global Migration Advocate for CBF (Cooperative Baptist Fellowship) and FBCOKC supports him through our World Missions Offering! Elket hosted our FBCOKC Mission Team in October 2025 in Harlingen, TX where we served migrants in the Colonias communities along the U.S. – Mexico border. Elket and Caly Fernandez, the

Executive Director of the non-profit *The House of Love and Justice*, distribute food and provide health initiatives like the Strengthening Families program.

In addition to ministering to the tangible needs of the migrant communities in South Texas, Elket has also been traveling to Washington, D.C. to advocate for the safety, dignity, and rights of migrants by asking legislators to support *The Protecting Sensitive Locations Act* (H.R. 1061/S. 455). The bill is designed to prohibit Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) from conducting enforcement actions – such as arrests, interviews, searches, or surveillance – at or within 1,000 feet of “sensitive locations” including schools, hospitals, places of worship, funerals, playgrounds, and social services centers. The purpose of the bill is to ensure that immigrant communities can access essential services (health, education, legal) without fear of immigration enforcement.

God calls us to be a voice for the voiceless in our world. When I think of Elket, I remember the words of Proverbs 31(vv. 8-9): “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.” All of us, no matter who we are, are called to be a voice for the voiceless within our spheres of influence. This is one crucial way to be the presence of Christ to those around us. In addition to his advocacy work, Elket is currently developing curriculum and other resources that can help individuals, churches, and other organizations think about the ethics of global migration. He wants to spur conversations centered around what it means to love your neighbor across the street, in your community, nation, and world.

Ways to Pray for Elket:

Pray for Elket and his family as he travels for advocacy work, particularly for moments of rest and renewal in the midst of a busy schedule.

Pray for discernment as Elket continues to explore the various facets of his role as a global migration advocate in addition to ministering to the needs of the Colonias communities.

Pray for Elket and Caly to have safety and wisdom in going about their tasks with food distribution and other programs where ICE may be present.

COMING SOON: In the coming weeks, you will see a Missions Board in The Commons that displays where our FBCOKC mission partners are in the world, a brief bio and summary of their mission, their prayer needs, and other ways you can support them.



SERVING OPPORTUNITIES

ONE GIFT. MANY MISSIONS.

A simple way to impact our city, our nation, and our world.

Many people in our church want to give generously but feel overwhelmed, unsure which ministries to trust, how to properly vet them, or how much of their gifts actually reaches the mission field. FBCOKC's Missions Account removes that burden by providing trusted, known partners and ensuring that 100% of designated funds go directly to supporting our ministry partners.

When you give to our church's Mission Account, you help us reach:

Jerusalem - Right here in OKC

- Food and clothing ministry, addiction recovery and support, inner-city school ministry

Judea & Samaria - Across Oklahoma & the U.S.

- Native American translation work, border/migrant ministry

The Ends of the Earth - Italy, East Asia, Southeast Asia

- Church planters, refugee support, Muslim ministry

Why Give Through the FBCOKC Mission Account?

- One-stop-shop giving - one gift, local and global impact
- Strategic partnerships FBCOKC knows personally and prays for regularly
- No administrative overhead - 100% goes to mission partners
- Consistent, long-term partnership beyond one-time projects

Ways to Give

• Give Online

Click on the link below to give to the World Missions Offering! On the drop-down menu labeled "Purpose", be sure to choose "World Missions Offering".

<https://app.aplos.com/aws/give/FirstBaptistChurchOklahomaCity/GiveNow>

You can do one-time gifts or set up an account for recurring payments. If you have questions about online giving, please email tadams@fbcokc.org or call the church office at 405-232-4255.

• Give During Worship

We offer the chance for you to give by placing your offering in the plate that is passed at the end of worship. Envelopes are available in the pew rack.

• Mail A Check

Feel free to mail a check or drop it by the church office during business hours. Our address is:

*First Baptist Church of Oklahoma City
1201 N Robinson
Oklahoma City, OK 73103*

*A huge THANK YOU to Ryan Bowen (Chair of Missions Committee) for crafting this article to encourage us to invest in the WMO!

SENIOR ADULTS



The pictures are from a visit to Pops and the Round Barn in Arcadia. Ten of our seniors enjoyed lunch and spent the afternoon exploring the historic Round Barn. Unfortunately, I couldn't attend because I was sick, but I'm glad this group came together to have a fun time without a leader or minister.

Engaging in activities with one another helps foster relationships, promoting a sense of purpose, connection, and self-worth. Human connection and companionship can combat isolation and encourage trust, belonging, validation, and dignity. It has even been said that social connections can alleviate loneliness, which can weaken the immune system and negatively impact physical health.

Today, I encourage you to participate in activities with others at the church and throughout the community.



DISCIPLESHIP

Keep running the race set before you—a race worth training for and striving to win.

April in Oklahoma City is well known for its windy weather, the beautiful tulips blooming along the sidewalks of Myriad Gardens, and a festival of creative artwork in Bicentennial Park. However, it is perhaps best known for the OKC Memorial Marathon.

The marathon in OKC honors the spirit of "Run to Remember," a tribute to those who lost their lives in the 1995 bombing, bringing together people from around the world in a shared hope. Runners and spectators come from far and wide to take part in this significant event.

As many have trained to walk or run in this marathon, I'd like to reflect on what it means to run a long-distance race and on the broader race of life. I consider it a privilege to look back on my experiences and to have completed one full marathon and 16 half marathons in my lifetime. It was not easy, but very rewarding.

Keep running the race, don't give up, is a powerful message of endurance, as we reflect on scripture found in Hebrews 12:1-3.

I like how Eugene Peterson expresses it in the Message.....

12 ¹⁻³ *Do you see what this means—all these pioneers who blazed the way, all these veterans cheering us on? It means we'd better get on with it. Strip down, start running—and never quit! No extra spiritual fat, no parasitic sins. Keep your eyes on Jesus, who both began and finished this race we're in. Study how he did it. Because he never lost sight of where he was headed—that exhilarating finish in and with God—he could put up with anything along the way: Cross, shame, whatever. And now he's there, in the place of honor, right alongside God. When you find yourselves flagging in your faith, go over that story again, item by item, that long litany of hostility he plowed through. That will shoot adrenaline into your souls! (The Message)*

Running a marathon requires several key aspects, starting with endurance. A marathon is a long-distance run of exactly 26.2 miles, and it's not a quick sprint to the finish line. It demands sustained effort and stamina to keep pushing forward.

Focus is essential during the race. Keep your eyes, heart, and mind on the finish line to prevent weariness, discouragement, or doubt from taking hold.

As you run, you will encounter obstacles that can impede your progress if you are not aware of them. These challenges can hinder your ability to complete the race.

Always remember your purpose, running with intention and discipline. Finishing the race should be your primary goal; for the average runner, just completing the marathon is a significant achievement. As stated in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27:

24-25 You've all been to the stadium and seen the athletes race. Everyone runs; one wins. Run to win. All good athletes train hard. They do it for a gold medal that tarnishes and fades. You're after one that is eternal.

26-27 I don't know about you, but I'm running hard for the finish line. I'm giving it everything I've got. No lazy living for me! I'm staying alert and in top condition. I'm not going to get caught napping, talking about it to everyone else, and then missing out myself."

In life, there will be times when you need to lean on others for support and assistance. Consider the "cloud of witnesses" who have completed their races before us. Those who are with you now can also serve as a great support system.

All of these key aspects about running are likened to the long race of our journey in life.

Friends, do not grow weary in doing good; maintain your focus and push through the challenges of this long race.

Toni

MEMBERS



Joey Clifton—4/1

Lucas Goodpseed—4/4

Steven McConnell—4/5

Aryella Mindieta—4/5

Walter Capraro—4/6

Kylene Prescott—4/7

Glen Wallace—4/10

Debbie Rankin—4/12

Susan Stephenson—4/20

Margie Turpin—4/20

Dorothy Dowtin—4/24

Kyndal Johnson—4/24

Victoria Malony—4/24

Steve Marks—4/24

Athena Wallace—4/27

Susan Clothier—4/29

Cyra Jones—4/29

YEAR AT A GLANCE

April

April 3 Good Friday
April 5 Easter Sunday & Breakfast
April 12 Rick's Cafe
April 12 KOB Auditions
April 24 Kid's Night Out

May

May 3 First Family Feast
May 24 Pentecost Sunday
May 29 Kid's Night Out
May 31 End of Year Youth Bash

June

June 8-12 Kids Off Broadway
June 14 Deacon Nomination Begins
June 14-20 Youth Camp in Orange Beach
June 24 Quarterly Business Meeting
June 28 Summer Feast

July

July 4 Independence Day - Office Closed
July 19-22 Passport Kids Camp

August

August 2 Promotion Sunday/Blessing of Backpacks
August 9 Start of Term Feast
August 21 Kid's Night Out
August 23 Youth Hangout

September

September 18-19 Elementary Retreat
September 23 Quarterly Business Meeting
September 27 Fall Feast
September 27 Youth Hangout

October

October 9 Kid's Night Out
October 24 Trunk or Treat
October 30 Youth Hangout

November

November 6-8 Youth Retreat Anadarko
November 15 Thanksgiving Feast
November 20 Kid's Night Out

December

December 2 Annual Business Meeting
December 13 Sounds of the Season
December 20 Christmas Feast
December 24 Taste of Christmas

***Please note:** *Activities are subject to change*

Love God | Love Other | Make Disciples

Service Times

Sunday Mornings

Bible Study at 9:15am

Worship at 10:30am

Wednesday Evenings

Small Groups and

Children's Activities at 5:30pm

Choir at 7:00pm

FBCOKC Ministers and Staff

Sarah Stewart, Pastor

Brad Stewart, Missions Minister

Toni Adams, Minister for Senior Adults & Discipleship

Ariel Koerner, Minister for Young Families

Steven McConnell, Minister of Music

Don Clothier, Pianist

Justin Keiser, Facilities Manager

(405) 232-4255

info@fbcokc.org

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