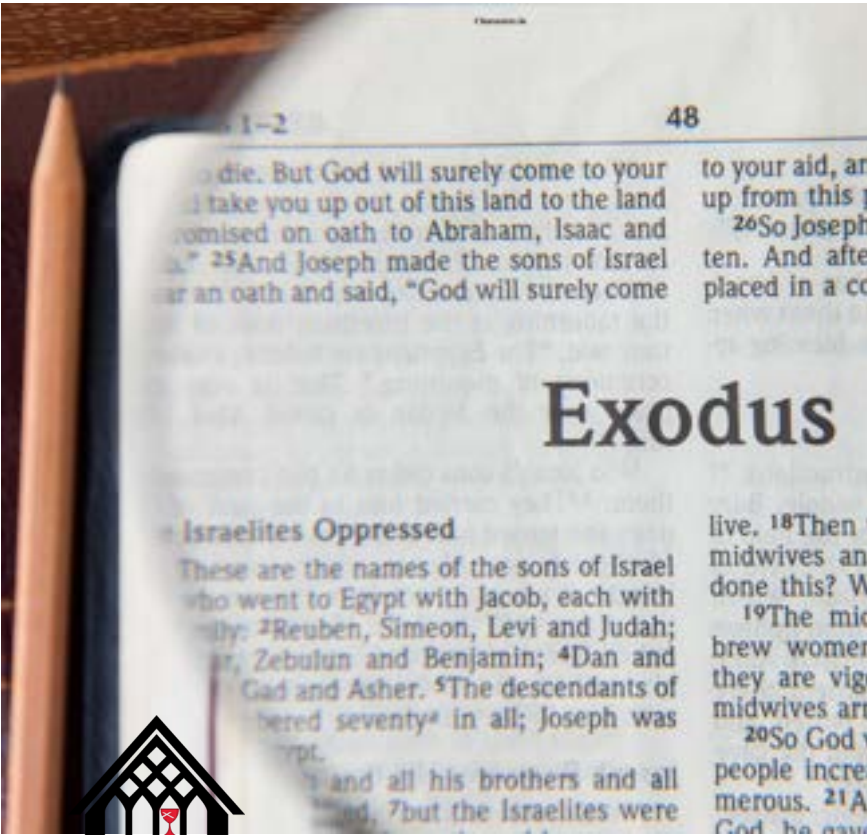




The Builder

First Christian Church
Midland

February 2, 2025 Volume 70 Issue 2



WEEK AT A GLANCE

SUN
FEB
2

SCOUT SUNDAY
10AM SUNDAY SCHOOL
11AM WORSHIP
4:30PM YOUTH & CHILDREN'S
EVENING PROGRAM

TUE
FEB
4

6PM STEPHEN MINISTRY
SUPERVISION GROUP
6:30PM CUB SCOUTS
7PM SCOUTING AMERICA BOYS TROOP

WED
FEB
5

7AM MEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST
9AM FOOD PANTRY
7PM CHOIR

SUN
FEB
9

10AM SUNDAY SCHOOL
11AM WORSHIP
4:30PM YOUTH & CHILDREN'S
EVENING PROGRAM
5PM YOUTH BOWLING PARTY
AT BOWLERO

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Rev. David Chisham
Senior Minister

THE BOOKS OF REDEMPTION

Approaching the book of Exodus, we're often dazzled by amazing events like the Ten Plagues and the parting of the Red Sea, but behind those marvelous details is the story of how God brings about redemption and salvation. It's a story that is written into the story of creation itself.

In the beginning, when God created the heavens and earth, contrary to what many theologies say, I don't think God created *ex nihilo* (out of nothing). Rather, the scriptures say that "the earth was formless and void and darkness covered the face of the deep." The picture that Genesis draws is that creation is a watery chaos, which is to say that there was something already there for God to begin to work with, and which God begins to order according to God's creative word.

Why doesn't God just declare bankruptcy and start over fresh and clean?

As we move through the stories of Genesis, we assume that at any point God could have started over from nothing, and in the story of the Great Flood, God almost does, yet what we see is that God works with people who are already living, shepherding them toward safety and salvation. I think this explains some of the extraordinary details, such as Abraham's age when Isaac was born; Abraham was 100 years-old and considered

himself far too old to be fathering children, yet by God's plan he helps a worn-out old man, and his wife who admits that she's much too old for such things, and opens a way for salvation and blessing to the world.

What we see is that there's a blessing and a curse to that path of salvation. On the one hand, God uses the resources that are already available. On the other hand, when those resources have already been conditioned by the world around them, it makes God's work complicated.

In the Book of Exodus, Israel's redemption from slavery happens only after years of conditioning to living in oppressive conditions in Egypt. When they pass through the Red Sea, it reads like another creation event with the Lord God bringing a new humanity through a watery chaos. But as the Israelites come through, in their hearts they're still dragging the chaos of Egypt with them. They complain that the food in Egypt is better. Rebellions form against Moses' leadership, and many of the people would rather live in Egypt than die in the desert. They worship a golden calf after they had been told not to worship other gods or make idols.

Along the way, the Lord God is tempted to start over from zero, or one. Following the incident with the golden calf, the Lord God tells Moses he's ready to quit the Israelites and start building a new people with Moses, and it is Moses himself who has to convince the Lord God not to do that. So the Lord God and Moses go back to the difficult work of shaping a new people of God out of the dysfunctional mass of Israelites.

I know it can be frustrating for us to read these chapters, wondering why God perseveres through chapter after chapter of complaining and rebellion and disobedience. Why doesn't God just declare

bankruptcy and start over fresh and clean? The short answer is that God prefers to redeem what is broken and repair what others might give up on as lost and worthless.

And that's a story for us. As frustrated as we get at the Israelites, we're guilty of some of the same things. Like the Israelites, we try to manufacture our own plan of salvation and build our own stairways to heaven. But it is God's gracious act to remind us that through we are not gods, we are God's creation, bearers of God's image, and have been set aside to be witnesses to God redeeming love.

As you plow through these books of Exodus, Leviticus, Number and Deuteronomy, they're not just about a what God did among the Israelites in millennia past, but continue to show how God redeems us today.

See you at the Table,



Rev. Tom Jones
Associate Minister

One of my favorite things in the Old Testament are the conversations between God and his people.

In Exodus, God speaks to Moses and calls him to lead the Israelites. Moses had many questions **Who am I to lead my people?** Doubts about his abilities. Feeling unqualified. **What if the elders don't believe me?** Worry about the future. Fearful thinking. **Yes, but I am slow of speech.** Self doubt.

How many times have we had the same thoughts? *Who am I? What if...? Yes, but...* Yet, we feel nudged, moved, or called and have these questions, God assures us that he will be with us and help us along the way. Moses was reluctant but he learned to trust and rely on God. That is the hope share together- walking with God in faith now and into the future.

How many times have we had the same thoughts?
Who am I? What if...?





Rev. Remy Tercero
Associate Minister
THE PRINCE OF EGYPT

When I was a young child, I remember really enjoying the movie *The Prince of Egypt*,

which is an animated movie that came out in 1998 that tells the story of Moses. As a child I remember the animation really catching my eye as well as the way they used intense music and imagery in their story telling. I had vaguely heard of the story of Moses but it was not until I watched that movie, that the story of Moses became real to me.

The creators of that movie made the story real through their tireless work in animating and directing that film. Although I enjoyed watching the movie, I remember being confused about one of the signs from God that impacts Pharaoh and his people, the final sign to be exact. I asked my mom “Why would God kill the first born in those families?” I thought that seemed like a sad and heartless move by God.

**God will find a way
to get us to stop and listen.**

Part of that bias may have come from the fact that I am the first born in my family, yet I never stopped wondering why God would do that? My mom didn't have an answer to my question and now that I think about it, what kind of child asks their parents why God kills people (I guess I did see glimpses of my future career in myself as a child.)

I never got my question answered so as I aged, I

viewed God with a sort of rough edge to him, like a God who could turn my entire life upside down if he wanted to. This adjusted my view of God. It wasn't until I was much older that I developed an idea as to why God behaved so harshly towards Pharaoh's people.

After each plague Pharaoh replied to Moses when Moses demanded the release of his people with the remark that he has “hardened his heart.” Pharaoh attempted to harden his heart and become immune to whatever the God of Moses could throw at him. His heart grew hard, and calloused.

However in the final acts the phrase is switched from Pharaoh hardening his own heart to God hardening Pharaoh's heart. Pharaoh's heart became so hardened, that God had to really hit him where it hurt to fully convey his message. The locusts could take Pharaoh's food but he could always grow more. The river of blood may have startled Pharaoh but he could shake that off, but what could God do to Pharaoh to get his message to stick? He could hit him where it hurts by taking from him his first born son, the heir to this empire that he clings to.

God brought Pharaoh down to nothing so that he would finally listen. Pharaoh put so much effort into hardening his heart that God needed a cannon to finally break through the walls off his heart. If we make it difficult for God to convey a message to us, God will find a way to get us to stop and listen. We are to give God plenty of space to influence our lives through prayer and meditation or God will find a way to humble us.

KIDS @ FCC

Sunday School

Preschool/Kinder will continue hearing and watching stories about Jesus.

1st – 5th Graders will continue reading about Acts of the apostles.

All families will receive a copy of “The Complete Illustrated Children’s Bible” to read at home. This is possible because of one of our generous and loving church members. Please come to Sunday School so you can receive your copy.

Children’s Church

Preschool/Kinder will hear the story of “Noah’s Ark”.

1st – 3rd Graders will continue learning about Jesus’ ministry.

Sunday Afternoon

Kinder – 5th Grade have completed the Valentines for our beloved “Young it Heart”. Thanks to the following children: Cooper, Nathaniel, Lillian, Marilyn, and Mavis. What a creative group!

This Sunday will be “Game Time”, including a visit to the gym!

Youth @ FCC

Youth have a night out at Texas Burger.





Stewardship of First Fruits 2025

In the ancient Israelite tradition, before the full grain harvest had begun in earnest, God's people would bring their "first fruits", the first gleanings from the field, to the Temple in thanks to God and with trust that God would provide a plentiful harvest (Leviticus 23:9-14).

As we ended 2024, we are so thankful for the harvest that you shared with First Christian Church over this past year through your tithes, offerings and gifts. We share the good news that our General Fund finished the year to the positive of about \$100,000! Thank you for your generosity!

Looking forward to 2025, we wish to give you the opportunity to plan your "first fruits", your estimate of giving, for the coming year. The Lord commands the Israelites not to give from whatever is leftover, but to give faithfully, and give from the top. We invite you to prayerfully reflect on your giving plan for 2025. These estimates of giving are important as we plan our budget cycle.

Follow the QR code on this page for a link to submit your information online, or contact our bookkeeper Anieta McNabb in the church office (ph. 432-682-2541, email amcnabb@fccmidland.org). Hard copies of an estimate of giving form will be distributed during worship services on January 19 & 26 .

Thank you, and may God bless you and your family throughout 2025 with grace, peace and abundance!





Prayer List

Those in need of prayer:

- Abraham Ortega
- Virgie Lewis
- Tere Valero
- Dave Burgard
- Nancy Stanley
- Patsy Hill
- Fred Yates
- Vincent Cooper
- Pat Marshall
- Ginny Estes
- Joshua Harrison
- Mary Beth Corbett
- Linda Taylor
- Lisa Craven
- Mark Cranford
- Cricket Harrison
- Betty Odom
- Fred Schwiening
- Nicky Rodriguez
- Lana Cooley
- C.C. Petteway
- Pat Chambers
- Kathy Landrum
- Sheila Crudgington
- Robert Crudgington
- Gary Thompson

Military:

- Lee Anna Crudgington
- Tyler Brown- *grandson of Lyn Brown*

Families, Friends Beyond

FCC

- Cindy Garcia- *CLC Teacher*
- Barrett Wood- *cousin of Ginny Estes*
- Jay Warren - *friend of Pat Marshall*
- Kairos Conde-

nephew of Olivia Espino

- Grayson Pickett-
- friend of Jeweli Flores*
- Al Schorre-*friend of Sharon Boyd*
- Robin Diegan & Jason Diegan-
- cousins of Ginny Estes*
- Amanda Bryant-*friend of Dave & Kathy Cromwell*
- Freda Benton
- Amanda Lee-*friend of Janice Ford*
- Reymondo Garcia-*brother of Maria Vinson*
- Gary Kennedy
- friends of Lauren & Justin Disney*
- Lee Stone-*brother of Jean Jones*
- Fred Copeland—*father of Lauren Disney*
- Ed Keah
- friend of Joy Singleton*
- J.M. Moore -*father of Kathy Landrum*
- Kairos Conde -*nephew of Olivia Espino*
- Oscar Garcia -*brother of Amparo Olguin*

Birthdays

- 02/01 Bill Boyd
- 02/04 Rachel James
- 02/06 Chris Huff
- 02/08 **Lillian Dzuik**
- 02/10 Sandra Schnable
- 02/11 Netha Aaron
- 02/12 Sharon Boyd
- 02/12 David Chisham
- 02/13 Chaney Coffman
- 02/13 Katie Coffman
- 02/13 **Abraham Ortega**
- 02/17 Lyn Brown
- 02/18 Gaylon Howard Sr
- 02/19 Meaghan Villa
- 02/23 Ann Minter
- 02/23 **Patton Dishron**
- 02/25 Mollie Wright
- 02/25 **Daniel Ortega**
- 02/26 Garrett Stephenson
- 02/26 Autumn Crudgington
- 02/27 Jeweli Flores
- 02/28 Becky Armour
- 02/29 Beverly Drummond

Anniversaries

- 02/09 Jack & Troy Campbell
- 02/14 Vinson & Maria Cooper
- 02/20 Dan O’Grady & Anne Shaunesy

Names in **red** are youth and children

Disciples Food Pantry is in need of 1 or 2 pound bags of rice and beans.





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www.fccmidland.org



The Story

my story

A Year Reading
through the Bible

Scan this QR
code to find the
suggested reading
plan for 2025!

