



# The Builder

First Christian Church  
*Midland*

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Volume 71 Issue 9



*God's  
Righteousness and  
Right  
Relationships*

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## WEEK AT A GLANCE

**SUN  
MARCH  
1** 10AM SUNDAY SCHOOL  
11AM WORSHIP  
2:30PM HANDBELL CHOIR  
4:30PM KIDS GROW & YOUTH GROW

**TUE  
MARCH  
3** 6:30 SCOUTING AMERICA  
CUBSCOUT PACK 67  
7PM SCOUTING AMERICA  
BOY TROOP 175

**WED  
MARCH  
4** 7AM MEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST  
9:30AM FOOD PANTRY  
6PM ELDERS MEETING  
7PM SANCTUARY CHOIR PRACTICE

**SUN  
MARCH  
8** 10AM SUNDAY SCHOOL  
11AM WORSHIP  
2:30PM HANDBELL CHOIR  
4:30PM KIDS GROW & YOUTH GROW

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Senior Minister

### God's Righteousness and Right Relationships

You have heard it said that your relationship with God comes before everything else. But I say to you, if there are broken and fragmented relationships in your life, work on those first, and then come back around to God. God will be waiting patiently.

That is essentially the move Jesus makes in Matthew 5:23–24, and we cannot overstate how shocking that would have sounded.

“If you are offering your gift at the altar,” Jesus says, “and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled... and then come and offer your gift.”

In other words, get up and leave the worship service in the middle of opening hymn. Step away from the altar. Leave your sacrificial lamb standing there in the Temple. Go mend the relationship while you still can. Only then return to offer your worship to God.

For people formed by deep reverence, whether in Temple courts or church sanctuaries, that is not a small suggestion. It is seismic. The altar was not casual space, and sacrifice was not a casual act. Yet Jesus dares to say that reconciliation with another person takes precedence over the ritual act of honoring God.

That is not because worship is unimportant. It is because worship that ignores broken relationships has misunderstood both how we

relate to God and how God relates to us.

As we continue walking through the Sermon on the Mount, we begin to see the genius flow of Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5:21–48. After announcing that he has not come to abolish the Law and the Prophets but to fulfill them, Jesus shows us what fulfillment of the Scriptures looks like. It does not begin with an abstract essay on God's holiness. It begins where righteousness meets the roads we tread every day.

Anger and contempt toward our own family and people. Faithfulness within the covenant of marriage. Basic integrity in our speech and business dealings. And retaliation, or the refusal to retaliate, when we are harmed.

In many ways Jesus turns the 10 Commandments on their head. He does not begin with a call to faithfulness to the Lord. He does not remind us to keep the Lord's name holy or have nothing to do with idolatry. He begins with how we related to siblings, spouses, adversaries, business partners, with the people who have wounded us and the people we have wounded. “You have heard that it was said... but I say to you...”

Again and again, Jesus moves the conversation from external compliance to inner transformation, revealing that our relationship with God is learned and expressed through how we relate to others.

It is a good thing if we refrain from murdering one another. But we cannot understand faithfulness to God's covenant if we are contemptuous of the people with whom we share that covenant (Matt 5:21-26).

It is a good thing if we refrain from cheating on our spouse. But we cannot begin to understand covenantal faithfulness to God if our promises to

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the covenant of marriage are intentionally porous (Matt 5:27-32).

What good is promising faithfulness to God if our word to others is unreliable (Matt 5:33-37)?

And while we may feel justified in retaliating proportionally, if God retaliated every time He was wounded, we would all be in serious trouble. God's perfection, as Jesus describes it in Matthew 5:43-48, is revealed not in tit-for-tat retribution but in mercy, a love that "makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good."

If Matthew's community was being pressured to demonstrate faithfulness through visible religious markers such as food laws, Sabbath strictness, and circumcision, Jesus presses them somewhere deeper and more demanding, faithfulness in the relationships that shape everyday life.

All of this builds to the climax when Jesus says, "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect". Jesus is not calling for sterile flawlessness. The word carries the sense of wholeness, maturity, and completeness. The context makes it clear that the perfection in view is love that mirrors the Father's love for us. Treat others with the same mercy and faithfulness that God has treated you.

God's perfection is not a philosophical abstraction. It is forged in God's living relationship with all kinds of people. For Matthew's church, this would have been

clarifying and stabilizing. In a time when identity felt fragile and faithfulness had to be visibly measured, Jesus' words cut through the noise. Righteousness is not religious performance. It is not posturing. It is not boundary anxiety. For us it is no different. In a time when many measure Christian faithfulness by exterior appearances, we are reminded that it's not about performance, posturing or anxiety about defining who is in and who is out.

It is about establishing and renewing right relationships. With your brother or sister. With your neighbor. With your spouse. With your adversary. Even with your enemy. Jesus shows that's where we learn to establish a right relationship with God.

Righteousness begins not in heaven but at the altar, surrounded by God's people, where we discover that worship and human relationships are inextricably intertwined.

As it turns out, God is patient enough to let us work on some other things first. He will be waiting.

See you at the Table,



## KidsGrow@FCC

The Kid Cave is glowing in the dark! We are having a blast! The only thing missing is YOU.

### Sunday School (10:00-10:45am)

PreK will hear the story about Jesus and the Children (Matt. 19, Mark 10, Luke 18).

Children (Kinder - 5<sup>th</sup> grade) will continue the series from the Grow Curriculum called "GLOW" for Lent/Easter. This week is all about the Last Supper.

### Children's Church (Sundays during Worship)

PreK will hear the story "A Hole in the Roof."

Children (Kinder - 3<sup>rd</sup> grade) will hear the story about the Holy Family Escaping to Egypt (Lent 2) from Luke 2.

### KidsGrow@FCC (Sunday Evenings from 4:30-6:00pm)

GLOW Week 2 - Come glow in the dark with us as we learn about the Lord's light shining in the darkness!

### Upcoming:

April 26 - NexGen Service

June 22-25 - VBS

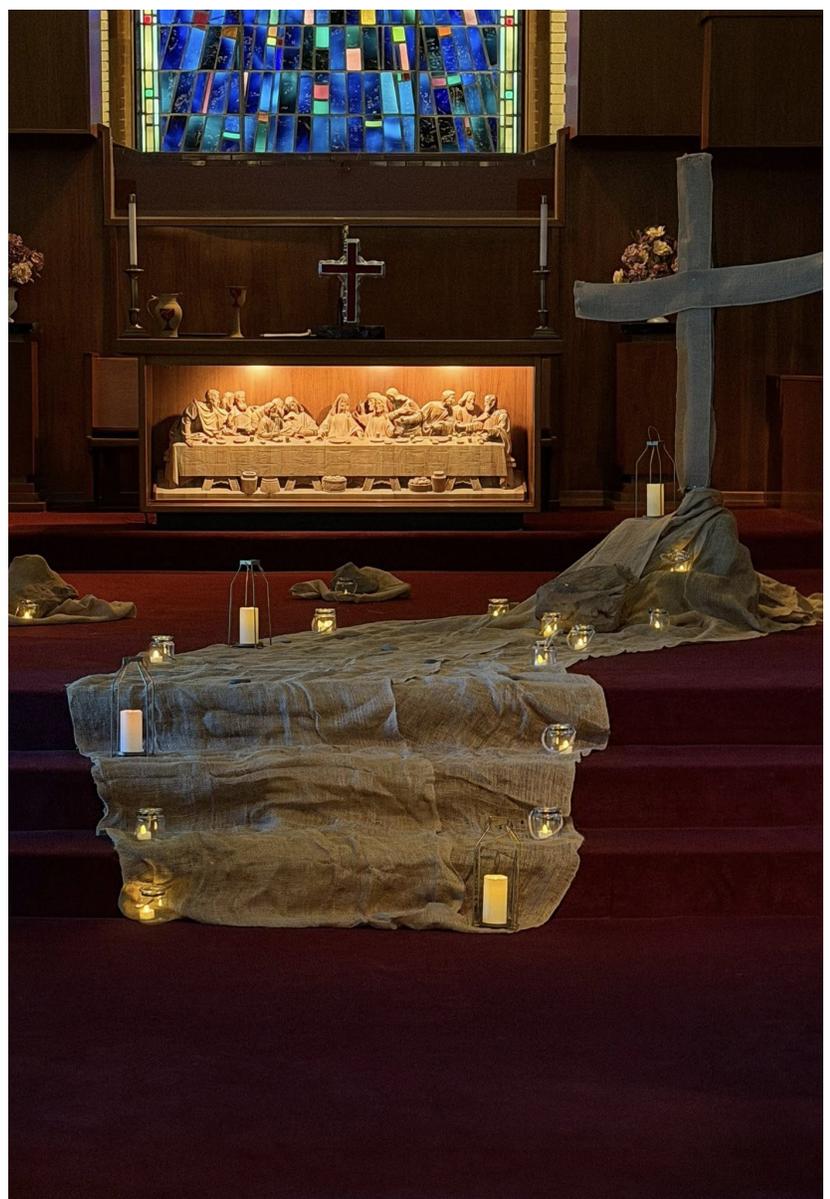
July 19-22 - Summer Camp at Lake Brownwood (3rd-5th grades only. RSVP as soon as possible. Scholarships available.)



# The Path to the Cross

For our Lenten pilgrimage we are inviting you to place a stone on the path that leads to the cross in the Sanctuary. If there is a word or a short phrase that is on your heart for these 40 days leading up to Easter. You are welcome to write that on a stone and place it as a symbol of your journey with Jesus.

(Stones and pens are available in the basket near the cross.)



**Daylight Saving Time**  
**March 8, 2026**

Set your clocks  
**AHEAD 1 HOUR!**



**March 12th**  
**11:30am**

**Disciple Women's**  
**Bible Study**  
**& Luncheon**

**March 22nd**

**CHURCH BOARD**  
**MEETING**  
 9:30am Montgomery Room

**CONGREGATIONAL**  
**MEETING**  
 11am Sanctuary




**April 11th**



**701 South Tilden**

**8am**



## Prayer List

Those in need of prayer:

Diane Faulkner  
Kathe Hepher  
Maria & Vinson Cooper  
Sandy Faulkner  
Bill Boyd  
Joy Singleton  
Judy Hunnicutt  
Mike Harrison  
Marty Wallace  
Bruce Stanley  
Chris Huff  
Betty Couch  
Cinnamon Stanford  
Abraham Ortega  
Kaylene Burgard  
Nancy Stanley  
Fred Yates  
Pat Marshall  
Ginny Estes  
Joshua Harrison  
Mary Beth Corbett  
Linda Taylor  
Lisa Craven  
Mark Cranford  
Cricket Harrison  
Fred Schwiening  
C.C. Petteway  
Pat Chambers  
Kathy Landrum  
Sheila Crudgington  
Gary Thompson

## Military:

Tyler Brown— *grandson of Lyn Brown*

## Families, Friends Beyond FCC

Sharon Thorton—mom of Dainel Thorton  
Kylea Stone—*friend of CLC*  
Nolan Gandy—*friend of Terry Perry*  
Cindy Garcia— *CLC Teacher*

Robin Diegan & Jason Diegan—  
*cousins of Ginny Estes*  
Amanda Bryant—  
*friend of Dave & Kathy Cromwell*  
Amanda Lee—*friend of Janice Ford*  
Reymondo Garcia—*brother of Maria Vinson*  
Gary Kennedy *friends of Lauren & Justin Disney*  
Fred Copeland—*father of Lauren Disney*  
Ed Keah—*friend of Joy Singleton*  
J.M. Moore — *father of Kathy Landrum*  
Oscar Garcia — *brother of Amparo Olguin*

## Birthdays

03/03 Jim Morris  
03/03 Destiny Crudgington  
03/05 Mary Lightfoot  
03/12 Clyde Kinsey  
03/15 Bill Terry  
03/16 John Schnable  
03/19 Michael Landrum  
03/22 **Brecken Hattenbach**  
03/23 Fred Yates  
03/23 Spencer Armour  
03/23 David Davis  
03/24 Mike Stephenson  
03/25 Sharna Gibbons  
03/28 **Aimsley Lastoka**  
03/30 Joe Gassie  
03/31 Gary Thompson

## Anniversaries

03/04 Roy & Jeannine Hurst  
03/12 Charlie & LuAnn Morgan  
03/17 Beau & Barbara Estes  
03/17 Joe Gassie & Pat Vincent

Names in **red** are youth and children



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*Love* God and everyone.

*Grow* as faithful believers.

*Serve* together.

