

Easter Sunday

April 21

Bible Study
9:00 am

The Gathering
Egg Hunt
10:00 am

Worship
10:30 am

Office Hours:

Monday - Thursday
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

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Return Service Requested

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Letters to My Church

I've found a lot of value in our Lenten sermon series Looking Inward to Move Outward, because it forces me to look within myself each week before I can even attempt to preach it. I said I find value in it. I did not say I've enjoyed it. Soul searching isn't easy. Getting honest about the motivations and attitudes that drive my behaviors is disconcerting. I prefer to tell myself a narrative in which I'm the hero, but that's not often the case. Most of the time my motives are tinged with selfishness even when my actions aren't. I do good things for bad reasons, bad things for good reasons, and many things for reasons too complex for me to understand without the help of a professional. Needless to say, looking inward is not my favorite pastime.



Jakob Topper
Senior Pastor

I'm much more comfortable preaching about the social ills of over-consumption than I am asking myself why I bought another shirt I don't need. I'm much more confident condemning racial prejudice than I am asking myself why I called the white salesperson at Dillards "sir" and the black salesperson at FootLocker "man." I call this the Preacher's Disease, but I'm convinced we all do it. Because we're either unable or unwilling to confront the real issues within ourselves, we externalize them and condemn them in others. It's the preacher who rails against sexual immorality each week no matter what the scripture is, but he's later caught looking at porn in his office or having an affair with a congregant. It is a spiritual truth that we condemn in others that which we do not acknowledge within ourselves.

Lent is the time of year when the Christian calendar challenges us to slow down and do the soul searching required to see the shadow within us we'd rather stay blind to. Lent is the time of year that encourages our churches and our preachers to stop looking around for something in society to speak against. Instead, it tells us to look within ourselves to find the real reason for our discontent with the world. What is inside me that encourages me to think such uncomely thoughts about the Republicans or the Democrats? What is it about my mother or father that drives me crazy? Why is it so hard to accept my child just as she is? Our work begins when we dismiss the other party's role entirely and focus all of our attention on discovering those parts of ourselves feeding our discontent.

If my dad annoys me because he's self-centered and doesn't listen, could it be because a part of me is self-centered and doesn't listen? Do I view my political opponents as close-minded and ignorant because it's me who has closed my mind to them, preferring to believe they are my ignorant stereotype rather than spend the energy to get to know the real them? Is my frustration about my child's grades because I want what's best for him or because I need him to make good grades so that both myself and others will see me as a good parent?

Motives are tricky, fickle things. They change even from moment to moment, and we must be spry to stay aware. It's no easy task, but it's worth it. Only when we've done the necessary soul work can we do good for good's sake. Only when our motives are laid bare can we honestly choose to serve God with all our heart, mind, strength, and spirit.

May Lent not last forever. But may it be long enough.

Easter is coming.

Jakob Topper



NorthHaven: An inclusive family of Christ followers, inspiring, challenging and equipping each other to participate in God's great story.



**Good Friday
and
Communion Service**

April 19th | 6:30 p.m.

Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a long sheet of clean linen cloth. He placed it in his own new tomb, which had been carved out of the rock. Then he rolled a great stone across the entrance and left. Both Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting across from the tomb and watching.

Matthew 27:59-61, NLT

“Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.”

Luke 24:5b



Easter Egg Hunt
4/21/19 @ 10:00am
Non Nut Candy
Donations Needed



April 1: Phyllis Crawford
April 3: Peggy Strunk
April 4: Debbie Pratt
April 6: Dianna Dorman
April 6: Missy Randall

April 7: Peggy Keefe
April 7: Kylene Prescott
April 7: Trevor Wilson
April 8: Sid Rieger
April 14: Rick Skeel
April 15: Colin Moore
April 16: Gage Foreman
April 16: Mark Lookabaugh
April 21: Michael Boyd



**Michael Boyd
&
Payton Wilson
WEDDING
SHOWER**

Sunday, April 7 @ 9 am
Registered @ Target

A Wild, Impossible God & An Ordinary Person

by Gala Van Eaton

“I want to be famous in the way a pulley is famous, or a buttonhole, not because it did anything spectacular, but because it never forgot what it could do.”

Naomi Shihab Nye excerpt from “Famous”

We are in the season of Lent, that time we examine ourselves in relation to Christ and the truth of who Christ is.

Name some great people in the faith who inspire you and whose lives you admire. Billy Graham? Mother Teresa? Lottie Moon? C.S. Lewis?

What about Biblical characters like Paul, Moses, Jesus’ mother Mary, Lydia, David, Miriam?

If you’re a reader you may think of Henri Nouwen, Dallas Willard, Flannery O’Connor, Barbara Brown Taylor or others.

Now name those whose lives are available to you here and now for up-close scrutiny—those who inspire you and whose lives you admire. Your preacher, maybe your Mom or Dad, Grandmother or Grandfather, a great teacher you’ve had, or possibly a good counselor or a friend.

Do you think it is possible for an ordinary person—like you—to share the same kind or amount of living and active faith as these people? Would you consider why or why not?

Mostly I struggle with accepting and being satisfied with—yes, even celebrating—my ordinary-ness. God says, “be holy, even as I am holy,” [1 Peter 1:16] but I have daily trouble with that. Often I need to ask, like David, that God “uphold me with a willing spirit,” [Psalm 51:12] even to desire to follow Christ.

Often I’m comfortable with my own way, trying to be my own god until something small or large stuns me into silence and I must face my complete dependence on something bigger than me.

It’s easy to fall into the ubiquitous lie that those saints I named before somehow are more special than me, more called, more noticed, and have something that is withheld from me and from most ordinary people—more faith.

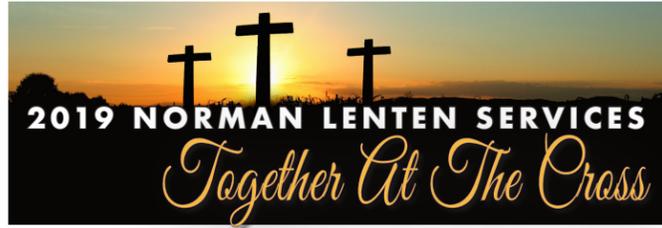
God surprises me. Sometimes he is hard to understand, given my perspective and the way I sell God short in my life. God tells stories that I soberly deconstruct and later wonder if God smiles or even chuckles at my soberness. After I review all the possibilities, God works in a way I never considered—a win-win kind of way that wasn’t in my imagination. God is unpredictable and wild in my book. I’m connected forever with this wild and impossible God.

Frederick Buechner says that true religion “puts us in touch with that holy part of ourselves, with that source from which...love comes, and from which all good, wise things come, so that we...become finally, truly human at last.”

I have this desire to be who God had in mind when God first thought of me—that person of love and faith in ordinary life. I’m inspired by the lives and stories of the names I considered at first. It’s easy to think they have some deep well of faith I don’t always feel.

When I have a glimpse of the faith given to me, or act in a way that proves what I say I believe, I have hope that God is uncovering the human God first made—that creation he said was good and the one that doesn’t hold back because I don’t think my faith is enough—the one that is celebrating the ordinary-ness of my life of giftedness—here and now.

What about you? Are you fully an ordinary person of faith connected to this wild and impossible God?



ALL SERVICES BEGIN AT NOON
A \$5 lunch is served at 12:35 p.m.

April 3
Grace Fellowship
102 W. Eufaula St.
Guest Pastor: Daniel Kitchel
The Cross Church of Norman

April 10
Memorial Presbyterian/
First Congregational
601 24th Ave. SW
Guest Pastor: Jeannie Himes
St. Stephens Methodist Church

April 17
Alameda Church of Christ
801 Alameda St.
Guest Pastor: Mike Butler
CrossPointe Church

At the conclusion of each worship service, an offering will be taken for Norman Regional Health System Foundations Pastoral Care Services.

He is Risen!



CBF OK Spring Gathering:
Discovering Our Partners!

Waylan Upchego Michael Korenblit CBF Coordinators: Steve Graham, Mary Knox, Rick McClatchy & Glen Foster

Friday, April 5

Where: Spring Creek Baptist Church
11701 North MacArthur Blvd.
Oklahoma City, OK 73162
405 721 3252

Schedule: 4:00 p.m. - Registration
5:00 p.m. - CBF OK Business Session
5:30 p.m. - Dinner
6:15 p.m. - Fellowship SW Partner
Glen Foster, CBF West
6:35 p.m. - OIABA Partner
Waylan Upchego, All Tribes, Geary, OK
6:55 p.m. - Interfaith Partner
Michael Korenblit, Respect Diversity*
7:25 p.m. - Break
7:50 p.m. - Worship - Glen Foster

*"Until We Meet Again" is the true story of a couple and their families in Poland during the Nazi occupation beginning in 1942. It shows the strength, will, love, sacrifice, and ultimate survival of the couple, with an added miracle 39 years later.
Authors: Michael Korenblit and Kathleen Janger, Respect Diversity Foundation
Autographed copies will be available for purchase

Saturday, April 6

Where: All Tribes Baptist Church
205 S Aurora Ave.
Geary, OK 73040

Schedule: 8:00 a.m. - Depart Spring Creek for All Tribes
9:00 a.m. - Construction and beautification projects -
All Tribes Baptist Church
12:00 p.m. - Lunch
4:30 p.m. - Closing and Departure



Register online: cbfok.org

Wednesday Schedule
5:00 p.m. - Dinner in the Compass Café
6:00 p.m. - Childcare / Kids Club / Bible Study /
NorthHaven Student Ministry
7:00 p.m. - Choir

Kid's Haven



I've been reading some articles lately about teaching kids to develop resilience. Resilience is defined as "the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness". I think most parents have a desire to raise their children with the skills and abilities to survive the big ole world that they will some day be navigating on their own. However, the love for our kids is so strong that the pull to over-assist them may actually work against the goals of independence and self-confidence.

Nearly every article I have read on the subject of teaching resilience has mentioned allowing our kids to fail. That is tough. Where does support and encouragement end and fixing all of our kids' problems start?

For several years Mike Bumgarner and I facilitated a parenting support group at NorthHaven. As part of that Mike led the group through a "Love and Logic" course. In a nutshell, "Love and Logic" started in the 70s and is designed to help parents raise kids that are prepared for real life. Much of the information I have read recently is of a similar thought – kids need to clean up their own messes and parents need to get out of the way.

Now, let me be the first to admit that I am a work in progress in this area. But, the longer I parent and the more I read, the more I realize the importance of this. Consistently, parenting experts state that when we allow our kids to solve their own problems we build their confidence. When we solve problems for them we send a message that we do not have faith in their abilities.

Another commonality in resilience teaching articles is the danger of parents making children the center of their world. I think this easily applies to most parents. We love our kids and we want them to know it...unfortunately we take it too far sometimes. And when we place our kids on a pedestal, they will eventually fall.

When we look at failure biblically, did David not fail? Saul/Paul? Peter? God didn't stop their failures nor did their failures destroy future success.

So, next time your toddler spills their milk, give them a rag to clean it up. Or next time your teenager fails a test or gets into a fight with their best friend, resist the burning desire to email the teacher or call the friend's parent. And most of all, encourage those parents around you – raising humans is no small job!

In Christ,
Kim

Church family, I can't even begin to thank you all enough for your support, encouragement, and prayers for Connection Weekend. It was such an incredible weekend and I know that God moved mightily in NorthHaven Student Ministry. To bear witness to the power of the Holy Spirit working in the hearts and minds of our students was an amazing experience. I saw our students grow closer to one another in love and friendship. I saw them put themselves aside and put the needs of others first, and I saw this youth group draw closer to the love of Jesus Christ. In such a short amount of time, these students took the things they learned and implemented them in acts of unselfish service to share the love and light of Christ. My prayer is that our students will continue to be inspired by the love of Jesus and will be bold enough to go beyond their comfort zones to share that love with all those they encounter. Thank you all so much for helping to make Connection Weekend powerful and transforming!

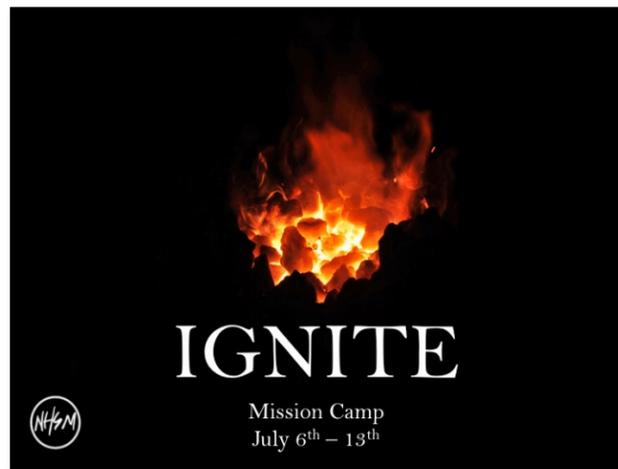
Michael Boyd



WEEKLY ACTIVITIES



UPCOMING EVENTS



“Seek God NOW!”

“If we ever needed the Lord before, we sure do need Him now, Oh, we sure do need Him now. Oh, we sure do need Him now. If we ever needed the Lord before, we sure do need Him now. We need Him every day and every hour.” These lyrics are from an old Take Six (an a cappella group) song that have been buzzing around in my head for a while. The tune is a simple one, very catchy and sing-able. The text is simple, as well, and a meaningful prayer to God. In a recent article I read “If we ever needed a season of repentance, reflection, and renewal, we need it now.”

Isaiah 55:6 says, “Seek the Lord while He may be found, call on Him while He is near.” Kyle Caudle, Associate Pastor at FBC, Winchester, Virginia, quoted this scripture in a weekly blog titled “Urgent.” In his blog he talks about the urgent culture we live in with its constant texts, tweets, emails, status updates, and push notifications. He states, “everything is urgent, all the time.” Kyle says prophets like Isaiah wrote with a sense of urgency of the utmost importance. The Isaiah verse calls us back to God. In this time of Lent, we need to be called back. However, our technology is an ever-present intruder. It robs our time and often prohibits us from living in the moment. If it keeps us from face to face interaction with family, friends, and others, then what is it doing to our interaction with God? Scripture tells us we are to give attention to and desire a connection with our God. There is nothing easy about contemplating our relationship with technology and how it affects our relationship with God. In today’s world it seems we are more easily distracted than ever before. Sometimes we choose to be distracted to get our minds off real life difficulties rather than dealing with them. It is much easier to just be busy. Maybe this is another reason we need the Lenten season to refocus, listen, and connect

with God. If we can give attention to God, maybe we can give attention to each other as well.

As I write this article, I am concluding a week in North Carolina. This semester I have been teaching voice students from Montreat College via SKYPE. My brother-in-law is VP there and needed a voice teacher for the semester due to an unexpected circumstance. It has been an interesting experience, for sure. An accompanist must be in the room with the student for this process to work very well, and luckily, Carla Sperry has been great to be there to serve in that capacity. I cannot sing ‘with’ them because of the delay, but we are getting the job done. When Clay and I realized that our Spring Break was the week after Montreat’s, we decided to go to NC so I could actually work with the students live, in the same room! It was great! Technology is wonderful and enables us to do things that were not possible just a few years ago. SKYPE has been and will continue to be a good tool to make the voice lessons possible. But there is nothing like being able to demonstrate what I want the students to do by being right there by them physically. Plus, singing is such a personal thing – our body is our instrument! Even though I only got the one chance to see them in person, it was SO helpful for all of us. There really is nothing like person to person interaction. If that is true, then how important it is that we spend time with our Lord.

I have been learning about contemplative prayer in Gala Van Eaton’s bible study this semester. Even though for me, contemplative prayer has been a challenge, it is something I want to continue pursuing because I want to be open to interaction with God in a different way. Just like the technology tools at our disposal, we have faith tools to assist us in our interaction with God through bible study, worship, and certainly prayers of petition. But...we need to also listen to what God wants to say to us. He speaks in many ways. Like the song at the beginning of my article said, “if we ever needed the Lord before, we sure do need Him NOW!” He is ready for us. Are we ready to listen?

Cheryl