



**Anniversary Celebration**  
**Sunday, April 21, 2024**

**North Haven**  
**CHURCH**  
**20 Year Anniversary**  
**April 18, 2004**

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**NorthHaven 20th Anniversary Celebration:** We will be having a catered lunch from Ray's BBQ. We need to know if you are coming so that we have enough food for everyone. **Please sign up by April 14th** on the sheet outside of Sheri's office or email her at [sheri@northhavenchurch.net](mailto:sheri@northhavenchurch.net) to let us know how many in your family will be coming. We will also have a bounce house, a booth where you can purchase Italian ice, and other fun things to do. You don't want to miss it!

Return Service Requested

P.O. Box 722772  
Norman, OK 73070



**Letters to My Church**



Jakob Topper  
Senior Pastor

One of my old pastors used to always pray the same words at each baby dedication: "Lord, give this child a good life, not an easy life."

As a parent I don't want my children to have hard times. I hate it when one of them comes home from school sad because a friend wouldn't play with them at recess. I want to protect them from these painful experiences as ordinary as they are. I forget how important it is developmentally for children to be sad and to learn how to bare it. My children don't need me to protect them from all pain and sadness; they need me present and compassionate to support them as they move through it. This is a harder lesson for parents than children, I think.

I strongly suspect that when NorthHaven Church was dedicated, someone prayed that same prayer over us: "Lord, may this church have a good life, not an easy one." And the Lord answered.

Over two decades ago, a group of Baptist dreamers gathered to pray about the future of the Church in Norman, Oklahoma. They dared to let themselves envision a church without divided loyalties, who didn't have to cow-tie around the Southern Baptists and their restrictions for women ministers, but could instead live fully into who God was calling them to be.

That dream was realized on April 18, 2004 when NorthHaven Church was birthed as a Cooperative Baptist Fellowship congregation not fighting to preserve a misremembered past but living into God's future. A



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future where all of God's children are welcomed and included with love and mercy for one another without any caveats or asterisks.

On December 16, 2004, a NorthHaven Church Task Force met at the Presbyterian church to present the findings of their visioning study. Long before NorthHaven owned any property, designed a building, or moved into its own space, it took steps to discern who she wanted to become.

The task force began by acknowledging a few things about who the church was before describing who it wanted to become. According to the task force, NorthHaven was made up of moderate and progressive Baptists who wanted something different in their church life. They started NorthHaven for that particular purpose. Most of the members at that time came from a church split and were still going through the healing process. Most were lower and middle class persons who would be classified as intellectuals, the task force observed.

The presentation also acknowledged that NorthHaven was a regional church not confined to any one geographical area. It drew members from Lexington, Midwest City, OKC, Moore, Ada, and even Ardmore. Today, we still draw members from many of those places as well as Blanchard and other, new locations.

Then, in Part II of the task force presentation, it answered the question: Who do we want to be?

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



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1. We want to be different, and we know if we are going to achieve this, then we are going to have to be very intentional.
2. We want to be a church that is more ministry minded, not a church based on programs.
3. We want to be a church that ministers outside the walls of its building.
4. We want to be qualitative not quantitative.
5. We want to be challenged intellectually, seeking a good balance of head and heart.
6. We want to reach out to the community.

To support these goals, the church voted to give 15% of every dollar to missions outside the walls of the church and in the community. It also hired an educated, full-time pastor even before having a building.

NorthHaven was never a large church, and from our earliest days, we made a conscious choice to prize quality over quantity. We've always been a quirky church who was self-aware and content with the strange place that we inhabit in the religious landscape of Oklahoma- even taking steps to protect that uniqueness.

20 years later, as we prepare to celebrate two decades of life, NorthHaven is in the midst of a rebirth of sorts. We've uprooted ourselves and replanted our congregation in a different environment, with a different eco-system of challenges and opportunities. We've resolved financial problems that kept us inwardly focused and are now engaging the community beyond our walls in excited ways once again. It wouldn't be wrong to say that our rebirth is, in some ways, both a return to our founding principles and a continuation of them. We're not retreating; we're advancing. We're taking core values and bringing them with us into a new location and into a new decade of life.

Lord, may our next 20 years be good, even if they're not easy.



April 1: Phyllis Crawford  
 April 3: Peggy Strunk  
 April 5: Esther Duncan  
 April 6: Lucas Knapp  
 April 6: Missy Randall  
 April 7: Monica Jimenez

April 8: Sid Rieger  
 April 9: Philip Morris  
 April 11: Kathleen Best  
 April 13: Patti Drennan  
 April 14: Rick Skeel  
 April 15: Colin Moore

April 20: Meldy Tanako  
 April 29: Craig Michael



# NorthHaven Family Ministry

April 2024

Monthly Newsletter of NorthHaven Family Ministry

## MISSION MADNESS

THOUGH IT WAS A SHORT WEEKEND, THE EXPERIENCES THAT OUR YOUTH SHARED WITH SPRING CREEK AND ALL TRIBES CHURCHES WAS EYE OPENING AND LIFE CHANGING. THANK YOU FOR BEING SO SUPPORTIVE OF OUR YOUTH!



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