

In foster, I found—and shared—the Gospel

Unlike many of you reading this, worship and faith are fairly new to me. Like 400,000 other kids in the United States, I am in foster care.

Three years ago, I was placed in a children's shelter — a temporary stop in my journey to my home now. At the shelter, I got my first chance in life to explore the Gospel and faith. While I did not attend church, I was able to access Bibles and study materials to help me find and build my faith.

Younger girls at the shelter would attend church but did not understand what they were being taught. I would use the study materials and the Bible to build my understanding — while trying to help them understand.

At my next stop on my journey, I continued doing Bible studies with girls in the house, but I discovered many roadblocks to sharing the message. Though we were in a place that was supposed to be a Christian home, often we weren't allowed to attend church. Sometimes, we even were asked to stop the Bible studies.

I got mixed messages on what faith truly is, but this only made my desire to share the message I was learning stronger. In one meeting, I asked my case workers to require my foster parent to take me to church on Sundays. It wasn't until moving to my current home that I was able to dig deeper into the truth of Bible and get help growing the faith that I proclaim.

In a world filled with brokenness, disbelief, distrust and criticism, what exactly is faith, and how do we make our faith known? Even in a society that claims to be Christian, this is not always clear. Many Christians want to share the Gospel, but all too often they do it in a way that non-believers do not understand. They know nothing about this man we call Jesus.

Is sharing the message enough to make people believe it is not just a story? Or is there more? In Hebrews chapter 11, we are given many examples of heroes of faith.

“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for,” we read in the first two verses. The writer then gives examples of faith heroes such as Noah, Abraham, Moses and many other Old Testament figures, showing how they lived out their faith. They followed God's commands. Their faith had action. As we read in James 2, “Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”

Colossians 3 says it like this: “Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.... And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

If we are to truly make God known in the world, we are going to have to live our faith out loud. We should show others who Jesus is through the way we act and speak. Above all, we need to show the love Christ had for us when he died on the cross.

I encourage you to not be afraid to share the message of Christ — even if your faith story has not been perfect.

*ELIZABETH OXFORD—Christian Chronicle, June 8, 2017
Oxford and her foster family worship with the
Austin Avenue Church of Christ in Brownwood, Texas.
She will attend Ranger College in Texas this fall and
hopes to become a teacher. This piece is adapted
from a speech she gave at the 2017 North Texas
Leadership Training for Christ convention in Dallas.*

PRAYER LIST

- **Pauline Alvarez** (recovering from surgery)
- **Lauren Babb** (health)
- **Aaron Banks**
- **John Beiler** (health)
- **James Bohannon** (Rex Boggs's cousin—health)
- **Jim Carpenter** (Cody Chrismon's great uncle—health)
- **Dawn Clarke**
- **Betty Cox** (Brent Barnick's sister—Texan nursing home)
- **Dixie** (Debbie Faires's mother—Alzheimer's)
- **Jake Faires** (Air Force, deployed to Jordan)
- **Steven Faires, and Lexi**
- **Leon Giesecke** (Jan Moerbe's father—throat cancer)
- **Nelle Hahn** (health)
- **Josh Horn** (Jacob White's cousin—health)
- **Debbie Jalufka**
- **Kevin, Victoria and Kyla Johnson**
- **Norman Pennock** (Debbie Fougerat's step-father, health)
- **Ada Powell** (Sharron Mason's sister—health)
- **T.J. Reid** (Nelle Hahn's brother—health)
- **Jean Rice** (Rex Boggs's cousin—health)
- **Adrienne Zingrich** (Susan Barnick's cousin—cancer)

If you have any announcements or prayer requests you wish to have included in the bulletin or to sign up for weekly e-mail updates, please contact Victoria Johnson: 325-518-9205, victoria@gonzaleschurchofchrist.org.

PRAYER UPDATES

Congratulations to **Kevin and Victoria Johnson** who welcomed **Kyla Ruby** on Tuesday, June 13, at 2:33 p.m. Kyla was 8 lbs, 13 oz, and 21 1/2 inches long! Everyone is home, and mom and baby are doing well.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Thank you to everyone who helped make our Maker Fun Factory VBS a huge success!!

We had 15 children in attendance on Sunday, 34 on Monday, 23 on Tuesday and 38 on Wednesday. On Wednesday, 29 friends and family members also joined us for a final celebration.

Overall, 39 children came through our VBS.

This would not have been possible without your hours of dedication and hard work.

THANK YOU!!!

Watermelon on The Square

We continue serving FREE watermelon **this Friday, June 23**, at Confederate Square in downtown Gonzales during the Main Street Summer Concert Series, which runs every Friday evening in June. **The event runs 6-10 p.m.** If you are able, please arrive early to help with setup. Parking is also easier to find earlier in the evening. This week's concert features Los Desperadoz.

Fellowship Meal

Next Sunday, June 25, we will have our monthly fellowship meal in the annex immediately following morning worship. Anyone who is able is asked to bring a dish to share.

Singing at The Heights

Please make plans to join us **next Sunday, June 25, at 3:30 p.m.** at The Heights of Gonzales for our monthly singing and fellowship.

Volunteers Needed: Wednesday Night Meals

Volunteers are needed to prepare the entrée for meals on Wednesday evenings. To help, please sign up in the foyer. **If you signed up to prepare a meal, please send Victoria your menu by Wednesday the week before.**

Volunteers Needed: Communion Prep

Volunteers are needed to prepare communion in the coming months. This task takes very little time and is a great service to the congregation. Please sign up on the large bulletin board in the foyer.

Wedding Invitation

Dawn Clarke and Daniel Almaraz invite you to their wedding on **Saturday, July 1, at 2 p.m.** at the building. A reception will follow at the VFW Hall. Please see the invitation on the large bulletin board in the foyer for more details.

Host Family Needed

We are in need of a family to host our 5th-Sunday Fellowship next month (July 30). Please contact Kevin or Victoria Johnson if you are willing to host this event.

Wednesday Evening Meal & Bible Study

Please join us at **5:15 p.m. this Wednesday** for dinner in the annex. Anyone who is able is asked to bring sides to share, but please do not let that prevent you from joining us. Classes for all ages follow at 6 p.m.

Sunday Night Small Group

There is a small group that meets in the annex each Sunday evening from 6-7 p.m. The Lord's Supper is available.

Tuesday Morning Men's Prayer Breakfast

All men are invited to the annex each Tuesday morning at **6:20 a.m.** for a time of breakfast, prayer and fellowship.

Mark Your Calendars:

July

16—Men's Meeting
23—Singing at The Heights
30—5th Sunday Fellowship