

SUMMER AT FIRST & CALVARY



A SEASON OF
CREATIVITY, SERVICE,
AND CONNECTION

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This summer at First & Calvary was filled with moments of beauty, service, joy, and fellowship. We traveled together, served our neighbors, nurtured creativity in our children, and celebrated the gift of community. Each event reflected our mission—to love God, love people, and make disciples—through experiences that strengthened our faith and deepened our connections to one another.

Serving Springfield: Youth at Serve City

This summer, our youth group joined with other churches to participate in Serve City, a ministry that mobilizes students to serve in practical ways throughout Springfield.

Our youth painted walls, picked up debris, and swept plaster and dust—tasks that, while humble, helped local organizations continue their work in serving others. As Emerson Phillips, one of our students, reflected:

“This work didn’t always feel like we were directly affecting the lives of people who needed assistance, but it felt good to be participating in the work of organizations who serve our community in important ways every day. My favorite part of each day was the evening services. We sang beautiful songs and worshiped together as God’s family, which was really special. I felt God’s presence in a powerful way.”

Her reflection captures the heart of service: even when we don’t see the immediate impact, we are joining God’s work in the world—and we grow closer to one another in the process.



**Learn More about
F&C Youth**

A Day with the Masters: Nelson-Atkins Art Museum Trip



On June 14, a group from First & Calvary road-tripped to Kansas City to visit the Nelson-Atkins Art Museum. The day began in fellowship as we shared the ride together, listening to a recorded lecture from Rembrandt in the Wind author Russ Ramsey. His reflections on beauty, faith, and the lives of artists prepared us for the art we would soon encounter.

For many, the bus ride itself was a highlight. As Ardith Bjorge shared,

“I liked the fact that it was an up-and-back doable trip for one day. Everything was so well organized and went smoothly and comfortably. I enjoyed our time together in the shuttle where we could visit with people around us. And, it is always a treat to go to an art museum, especially when we had our own guides that tailored their tour for our interests.”

Inside the museum, we were immersed in the works of the great masters. Rick Uffmann reflected,

“To see the works of the masters was such a blessing. You can see God’s work in the artists’ product. Because of travel time, the time in the museum was limited—I could have spent days. The ride was comfortable and the companionship couldn’t have been beat! I hope outings like this are repeated. I’d like to see a group go to the Muny!”

For Carolyn Wortley, the trip was not only about the art but also the relationships:

“I so enjoyed meeting three new people and getting to know two others better. I have had contact with two of the new people since that trip. I had so much fun and it seemed as if everyone was also happy. I really liked going on a bus together. The museum had so much more to offer than I expected—not usually liking to walk around art, I found I could have used more time at the Nelson. I’m open to more trips like this.”





Judith Garson summed up the trip beautifully:

“It was well organized, happy, inspiring—and much more comfortable than my last bus trip... Seeing the museum masterpieces was a treat for the eye and the soul. It energized the lives of the artists and their paintings from the book.”

The day was a reminder that beauty is a gift from God, and that sharing experiences like this draws us closer together as a church family.

Faith & the Arts Academy: Creativity for God’s Glory

From July 7–11, the church was alive with color, sound, movement, and joy as children gathered for our annual Faith & the Arts Academy. This unique program encourages children to explore their God-given creativity through the lens of faith.

The theme for this year came from 1 Kings 7, focusing on how God helps us create, make beautiful things, make true things, and make strong things. Each day began with an opening rally featuring Bible lessons, music, and prayer before children rotated through their chosen art tracks.

The variety was as vibrant as the week itself: cake decorating, drumming, fable writing, musical theatre, painting, pottery painting, and praise dance. Each child spent the entire week in their chosen track, allowing them to build skills and create meaningful projects.

The week ended with Showcase Day, when families were invited to see and hear what the children had been working on. Then, on Sunday morning, participants sang one of their worship songs during the 11:00 service before picking up their artwork from the gallery.

Learn about Faith & the Arts Academy by going to www.firstandcalvary.org/faithandtheartsacademy



Bubble Blast Day: Joy in Fellowship

Immediately after the Faith & the Arts Academy Sunday celebration, families gathered on July 13 for Bubble Blast Day. The South Lawn was filled with laughter as children played in the foam cannon, chased bubbles, and shared pizza with friends. It was a lighthearted, joy-filled afternoon that reminded us that fellowship is a vital part of our faith life.



Wingfeather Watch Party

On July 27, F&C Kids hosted our first Wingfeather Watch Party, screening the first two episodes of the animated series based on Andrew Peterson's Wingfeather Saga. Guests enjoyed themed snacks, activities, and door prizes.

Children's Coordinator Amelia Davidson shared,

"Our first Wingfeather event was a blast! We pinned the tail on the toothy cow, ate our fill of maggotloaf, and talked about how God has a plan for us, even when we have more questions than answers. It was wonderful to see folks of all ages enjoying this time of fellowship."

The event not only brought together long-time fans and newcomers but also opened a space to talk about faith through the power of story.



**LEARN MORE
ABOUT F&C KIDS**



Faith & Fantasy: Pastor's Book Club

On August 10th, the church library transformed into a portal to another world as church members gathered to discuss the adventures of the Igiby children and their epic quest in the fictional land of Aerwiar. The summer Pastor's Book Club brought together readers of all ages to explore Andrew Peterson's "Wingfeather Saga."

The group of approximately twenty participants spent the summer immersed in the first two novels of the series: "On the Edge of the Dark Sea of Darkness" and "North! Or Be Eaten!" These fantasy adventures have gained recognition not only for their engaging storylines but also for the Christian themes woven throughout.

Pastor Don, who co-led the discussion with young church member Emerson Phillips, noted the special dynamic created by the diverse age range of participants:

"I was especially moved by how intergenerational this group was. Young and old (and those of us who like to think we're in-between!) engaged in meaningful conversation about these two novels."

Andrew Peterson, primarily known as a musician, has found considerable success in literature, with the Wingfeather Saga earning both critical acclaim and a devoted readership. The books blend whimsical adventure with deeper spiritual significance, something Pastor Don highlighted in his reflections:

"These novels are playful and filled with adventure, but they are also thoughtful and filled with metaphors and imagery that point to many of the good, true, and beautiful aspects of the Christian faith."

For co-leader Emerson Phillips, the opportunity to guide discussion around beloved books proved particularly meaningful:

"I must admit, I do struggle with keeping books to myself...and keeping from giving away spoilers! So for me, this book club was a fun way to get together and talk about two very good books. We had people of all ages, from kids to grandparents, and everyone was so excited to share their thoughts."





The multi-generational aspect created a richness in conversation that might not have been possible in a more age-homogeneous setting. Different life experiences brought varied perspectives to the themes of courage, family, identity, and faith found throughout Peterson's work.

"I loved hearing different perspectives on the characters and themes, and I felt everyone brought something special to the discussion!" Emerson shared. "It was wonderful to see how reading these books connected us all."

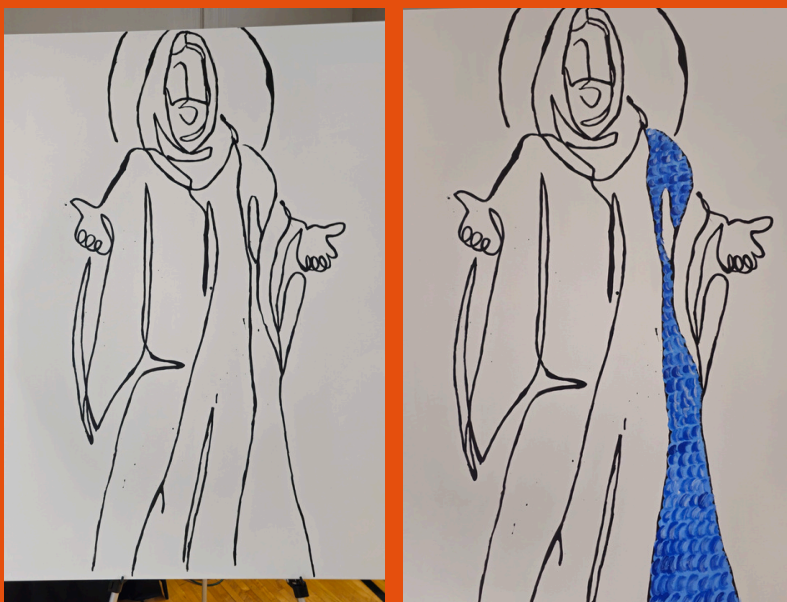
The pairing of Pastor Don with a younger discussion leader also modeled the church's commitment to mentoring and empowering the next generation. Pastor Don expressed particular appreciation for this collaboration:

"Co-leading the discussion with Emerson Phillips was another highlight. This young lady is super smart, has a deep faith, and has leadership gifts for helping others grow in their own faith. What an encouraging experience to partner with such a vibrant young believer!"

As the evening concluded, participants left with not only a deeper appreciation for the literary world Peterson created, but also stronger connections with fellow readers across generational lines. Emerson summed up the experience with a reflection on the value of such gatherings:

"Book clubs spark great conversations that go beyond just one person's opinions, and it's so special and important to have that. Coming together to talk about beautiful, good, and true books is a worthwhile thing; I'm grateful to have been part of it."

The success of this summer's Pastor's Book Club reminds us that sometimes the most meaningful church activities happen not only in the sanctuary but in the library, where stories bring people together and faith finds expression through the shared love of literature.



Encounters with Jesus: A Community Canvas

This summer we took a 14-week journey through the Gospels, exploring how ordinary people experienced extraordinary encounters with Jesus. From fishermen and tax collectors to Zacchaeus, Peter, and Paul, we saw how a simple moment—drawing water, sharing a meal, traveling down a road—was transformed by the presence of Christ.

Alongside the series, our congregation came together in a unique way: each week volunteers painted a portion of a larger portrait of Jesus. Piece by piece, the outline was filled in—just as week by week, we were reminded of the many ways we ourselves can encounter Him.

We are grateful for the stories, the artwork, and the ways God has been at work among us this summer. May these encounters continue to shape how we see Jesus in our everyday lives.



Join us this fall for our new sermon series: Hey, Tim! The Power of Everyday Conversations. Learn more at www.firstandcalvary.org/sermonseries

