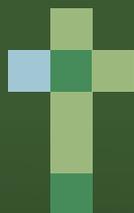


SEPTEMBER 2020



THE BRIDGE PROJECT

EPHESIANS 2:14

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility...

On August 2, we began a sermon series called “Bridges” to help us see and understand Jesus as the ultimate Bridge Builder in our world. Jesus constantly stepped into the conflict and chaos of the world to make meaningful connections with people and to connect people to God. Ultimately, Jesus gave up his life to bridge the unreachable gap between sinful people and our holy God. Through Jesus, all of us can be with God now and for all eternity.

While learning and talking about bridge building is helpful, there comes a time when we must stand up, step out, and get busy building bridges. That is what The Bridge Project is all about. It is a month-long focus on mobilizing the Edmond Church of Christ as peacemakers, advocates, and bridge builders in our world.

Each week, beginning September 6, we will be given a specific theme and focus area, a guiding scripture, and several options of specific activities or projects in which to participate. There are multiple options to choose from because physical or other limitations may keep some of us from doing certain activities. Feel free to customize the plan, but please be willing to stretch yourself, get out of your comfort zone, and allow God to use these suggested activities as platforms for making meaningful connections with others in the name of Jesus.

Do the activities alone or with your family or as part of a coordinated Bible class effort. Some classes may even want to set class goals (e.g., 100% involvement in fasting this week or at least 15 driveway greetings this week, etc.). Consider enlisting others to partner with you for support, meaningful debriefing conversations, and accountability, which is extremely helpful in a project like this one.

While we have no desire to draw undue attention to ourselves or any of the good deeds we do, it would be encouraging to share photos and videos of these activities with the rest of your church family. If appropriate, please consider taking photos and/or videos of some of the various activities in which you participate, and share those with the church office so we can celebrate what God is doing among us.

 office@edmondcc.com

By submitting photos or videos, you authorize them for public use in assemblies and to be posted on the Edmond church website and social media.

An important part of the project is debriefing after each activity or at least at the end of each week. Use the debriefing questions included to discuss with family, friends, or your Bible class, or consider using them as personal reflections and write down your answers in a prayer journal each week.

Debriefing questions:

The exercise of debriefing is a very important part of this project. Reflecting on and talking about the individual people you encounter and the important lessons you learn are invaluable in God's transformative work in your life. When you engage in the suggested activities each week, decide to be fully present. Then, afterwards, process what God has revealed to you through the experiences you had.

Discuss these questions within a trusted community, including family, friends, or you Bible class. Debriefing and discussion with others provides opportunities for mutual learning, support, and accountability.

Consider these questions as you reflect on your bridge-building experiences each day/week.

1. What was one of the most enjoyable parts of this experience? Explain.
2. Was anything unpleasant? If so, explain.
3. What experiences in your past informed your approach to this specific activity?
4. What attitudes or emotions surfaced when you tried to make meaningful connections with God and/or others?
5. How did this experience give you a deeper understanding of ...
 - A. God?
 - B. Others?
 - C. Yourself?
6. What are you discovering about being a bridge-builder in the name of Christ?
7. What is one outcome from this experience moving forward? In other words, how will you put into practice the things you have learned and experienced?

SEPTEMBER 6-12

BRIDGES OF DEVOTION: CONNECTING WITH GOD

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. - *Romans 5:1-2a*

Through his obedient life, sacrificial death and glorious resurrection, Jesus has made a way for us to be with God now and for eternity. Living at peace with God and in the presence of God shapes one's character and inspires hope for daily life.

Look at your week ahead, and if possible, choose at least 3 of the following items to plan and participate in this week:

- **Food Fast:** Join your church leaders and your congregation in fasting from food for a designated period of time (e.g., from after lunch one day until lunchtime the next day or from after dinner one day until dinnertime the next day, etc.). Fasting is a biblical and effective way to bring perspective as you submit to God. Discomfort is good, but damage is not. If health issues keep you from fasting from food, don't do it.
- **Study Scripture:** Sit down and read the New Testament book of 1 John. Remove distractions, take notes, and spend time in personal reflection and prayer as you allow God to speak truth into your life.
- **Screen Fast:** "Fast" from screens and devices, including phones, televisions, tablets, video games, computers, etc. for a designated period of time, possibly 24 hours. Only spend time on devices that are absolutely necessary, but try to minimize what is necessary. Substitute your screen time with reading, praying, journaling, going for a walk, resting, playing a game, having a conversation, etc.
- **Self-Denial:** To practice self-denial and to develop a greater sense of self-awareness and gratitude, give up something you really enjoy for a designated period of time (e.g., 24 hours). What you give up can be anything that is meaningful to you and that you would really miss, including caffeine, sugar, soda, social media, network news, video games, etc.
- **Memorization:** Take the time to commit one or both of these passages to memory: Philippians 2:3-8 or Philippians 4:4-9. When scripture is imprinted on your mind, it is more easily recalled when needed.

Be sure to infuse your times of fasting and self-denial with prayer. Praise and thank God for sending Jesus to bridge the unreachable gap between sinful people

(you!) and our holy God. Pray about the people and concerns close to your heart. Pray for God to protect us from the pandemic, but also to help us learn the things we need to learn as we move through it. Pray for it to end soon. You might also consider journaling throughout the experience.

SEPTEMBER 13-19

BRIDGES OF ENGAGEMENT: CONNECTING WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

- 2 Corinthians 5:20

As ambassadors of Christ, we are called to build bridges with our community. Your neighbors, coworkers, and friends need to hear and see the truth and love of the gospel. Choose this week to be intentional about making meaningful connections with others in the name of Jesus.

Look at your week ahead, and if possible, choose at least 3 of the following items to plan and participate in this week:

- **Blood Drive:** Sign-up and give blood at the Edmond Church Blood Drive on Sunday, Sept. 13. [Sign Up Online >](#)
- **Prayer Walk:** If you are physically able, take a walk through your neighborhood or a nearby neighborhood and pause in front of each house to pray for its residents. In your prayers, mention specific names and details if you know the residents. If you don't know them, pray a general prayer of blessing and protection over them. If you are physically unable to go outside and walk, pray for specific neighbors from your home and let them know you prayed for them.
- **Higher Education:** Drive by a few nearby schools (e.g., daycares, elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, universities, etc.) and pray for them. Pull over or park in the parking lot (if appropriate and accessible) and spend time in prayer for school administration, staff, faculty, and students. These are challenging times for our educators and students. Also, consider sending a card, email or social media post to recognize and thank educators. If you are unable to visit area schools, pray for a specific school from your home and send school officials an email letting them know you prayed for them.

- **Frontline Gratitude:** Send a card, email and/or text message to say thanks to any healthcare workers, law enforcement, fire fighters or first responders you know. Thank them for their sacrifice and service, and let them know you are praying for them.
 - **Discovery Bible Study:** Start a Bible study with 2-3 friends, coworkers or neighbors using the biblical texts and specific questions on our DBS bookmarks. DBS is an easy and effective way to open the Bible with others. [Check Out Our DBS Archive Online >](#)
 - **Serve Your Neighbor:** Find a way to serve a neighbor in the name of Jesus: take food to a neighbor in need, mow someone's lawn, watch a friend's kids so they can go to a doctor's appointment, offer a ride to someone, take groceries to someone who is choosing to stay home right now, wash someone's vehicle, pull weeds, trim trees, etc. Remember to articulate why you are doing what you are doing for them in an effort to point them to Jesus.
 - **Friendspeak:** Volunteer to help others learn English by reading the Bible. [Email the Church Office >](#)
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SEPTEMBER 20-26

BRIDGES OF LOVE: CONNECTING WITH YOUR FAMILY

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. - *Galatians 6:10*

God has surrounded you with a physical family and a spiritual family—people with whom you have the blessing to share life. What can you do this week to build or repair bridges within your physical family and church family?

Look at your week ahead, and if possible, choose at least 3 of the following items to plan and participate in this week:

- **Give Thanks:** Thank God for someone in your immediate family and someone in your church family. Take the time to send a note, email, call or text these two individuals to express your gratitude. Share specific things about them for which you are thankful.
- **Reconnect:** Is there someone in your family or church family with whom you have conflict? Whatever your role in the dispute or disagreement, decide to initiate contact with the person for the sake of reconciliation (see Matt. 5:23-

24). Ask God to help you speak with love and show patience as you approach the other person in humility with the goal of building a bridge of reconciliation.

- **Messages to Missionaries:** Our missionaries are an important part of our extended church family, serving in the trenches around the world to make disciples. They could use your encouragement right now. Take the time to send a card, note or email to our missionaries, or get real creative and make a greeting video to share with them. [Connect with Our Missionaries >](#)
 - **Driveway Greeting:** Is there someone in your family or church family who is essentially homebound because of the pandemic? Notify them and set up a time (or surprise them), and drive over to their house for a “driveway greeting” or “encouragement parade.” Make posters or signs of encouragement. Bring cookies or flowers. Sit in your car or in a lawn chair on the driveway and visit for a few minutes. Conclude with a prayer of blessing. For ideas of people in your church family who would be blessed by a driveway greeting, contact the church office (341-3353). [Email the Church Office >](#)
 - **Faith Story:** Ask someone to share his/her faith story with you. This conversation can be done in person, over the phone, or in an online video platform. Many people haven’t thought much about their stories, so give the person advanced notice so he/she can give it some thought. As you listen to the individual or couple share their story, express sincere interest and ask lots of follow-up questions. Tell the person how much it means to you to hear the story. If you want to get children involved, have the kids also listen to the person’s story and draw a picture that depicts the faith story they are hearing. Afterwards, share the picture(s) with the person telling his/her story as a token of appreciation.
 - **Bridging Generations:** Find a way to bring multiple generations together. Consider setting up an online video meeting (e.g., Zoom) with grandparents and grandkids, or between your children and some of our older members at church. Or video record your children singing a special song, and send it to older members who so badly miss seeing all the children at church.
 - **Original Idea:** Come up with your own way to bless someone in your family or church family in a meaningful way. Think about the needs or desires of the people you know, and try to come up with a creative way to meet those needs or desires.
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SEPTEMBER 27-OCTOBER 3

BRIDGES OF COMPASSION: CONNECTING WITH THOSE IN NEED

“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’” The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

- *Matthew 25:37-40*

Jesus went out of his way to make meaningful connections with people who were marginalized and in need. In fact, it was the hurting and hopeless Jesus came to bless (see Luke 4:16-21; 5:27-32; 7:20-22). When others tend to overlook or oppress the marginalized in our world, we have opportunities daily to show compassion in the name of Jesus.

Look at your week ahead, and if possible, choose at least 3 of the following items to plan and participate in this week:

- **Care for the Sick:** Do you know someone who is sick or in the hospital? If so, do something nice for him/her. Take food or flowers, or give them a gift card. If you have children, let them make homemade cards or cookies and deliver them. For ideas of people in need, check the prayer list in the bulletin.
- **Raise Awareness:** Seeking justice in our world—that is, working to right the wrongs—usually begins with becoming aware of injustices. Take the time to educate yourself and raise your awareness on issues such as foster care and adoption, racism, sex trafficking, abortion, or one of the many other issues that produces victims of injustice. Read a book, watch a video, listen to a podcast, etc.
- **Service Center:** Volunteer at the Luther Service Center, a Christian organization that provides food and clothing to those in need. [More Info >](#)
- **Foster Care:** Make a donation or prayerfully consider enlisting as a foster parent with Lilyfield, a local Christian organization for foster care and adoption. [Get to Know Lilyfield >](#)
- **Food Pantry:** Donate food items for our church food pantry. Each week, we hand out multiple boxes of food to people in need, always inviting them to join us for worship. Specific food items needed now include canned tuna & chicken, chicken/tuna helper, Banquet meals, spaghetti sauce, peanut butter & jelly, boxed cereal, syrup (*no pancake mix needed at this time*)

- **Least of These:** Do something nice for someone in need. Feed the hungry, help the poor, provide resources for someone in need, buy a tank of gas, etc. If possible, try to do the act of kindness anonymously.
- **The Kids' Place:** Volunteer as a greeter or group facilitator and provide comfort and healing for grieving children and their families. If interested, [Email The Kids' Place >](#)
- **Follow-up:** Reach out to some of the 50-60 people from the community we have helped with benevolence recently. Send a message, card and/or church resources (e.g., children's Bible studies, devotionals, etc.) and invite them to join us for worship. Contact [David Denton](#) for contact information of individuals or families with whom you can follow-up.