

first
stone

newsletter

"Let him who is without sin cast the First Stone"
And Jesus also said, "Go and sin no more." – **John 8**

MINISTRIES

Inquiring of the Lord



**Laura
Leigh
Stanlake,**
Ministry
Director

We are now in our fiftieth year of ministry at First Stone. I find my heart anchored in one steady reality: God is faithful and true.

For five decades, He has sustained and built this ministry, guiding, providing, and transforming lives through the power of Jesus Christ. We are deeply grateful for the many leaders, individuals, and families who have been part of that story. Every changed life and every life supported is a testimony to His kindness and His truth at work among us.

This anniversary invites us to reflect with gratitude and to look ahead with intention, asking the Lord to lead us clearly into what is next.

After two significant victories, the people of Israel were approached by travelers who claimed to have come from a distant land. Their story seemed convincing. Their bread was dry and moldy, and their clothing appeared aged from a long journey. Everything seemed to confirm their story. According to Scripture, God's people were deceived because they only examined the evidence and looked at what seemed reasonable, but they did not inquire of the Lord (Joshua 9). As a result, they entered into a covenant that brought hardship for generations to come, all because they did not turn to the Lord.

This kind of seeking is often slower than we expect. It happens as we return to the Lord again and again in prayer, as we listen together, and as we make room for Him to lead us. It calls us to slow our pace, resist the pressure to decide too quickly, and trust that His direction is worth waiting for.

I find myself less interested in mapping out five- or ten-year plans; I'd rather us have a clear sense of the Lord's leading. We're becoming more committed to seeking Him faithfully for each step ahead.

That has meant slowing decisions, revisiting them in prayer, and seeking the Lord not only individually but together as a staff and leadership team. We are giving careful attention to wise counsel, allowing time for clarity to develop, and resisting the urgency to move just because something appears right in our view. This kind of attentiveness is shaping how we approach what lies ahead.

In 1 Kings 12, we find another cautionary account. Rehoboam stands at a pivotal moment in his leadership and seeks counsel from the elders who had advised his

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Holding Love and Truth When It's Challenging



**Jim
Farrington,**
**Men's
Minister**

Before moving back to Oklahoma, the word *empathy* wasn't part of my daily vocabulary. I don't remember hearing it much or seeing it lived out in any meaningful way. Over time, as I've heard it more and watched how it's used, I've found myself asking a deeper question—especially as I've watched families face the weight that often comes when a loved one begins to anchor their identity in questions of sexuality or gender. These are not abstract issues. These are real sons and daughters, people deeply loved by God, more than any parent could, and who often carry real pain, questions, and confusion. I have sat with many who are trying to make sense of their lives and their experiences. I don't take that lightly, as I also am a parent of a daughter who has had her own conflict with identity, and questions of whether or not she is non-binary, while still anchored to a gay identity.

Empathy, rightly understood, reflects the heart of the Father. We see this clearly in Jesus. He met the woman caught in adultery with both compassion and truth. He engaged the woman at the well with kindness that exposed her deeper realities. He touched the lepers, healed the broken, and wept over Jerusalem, longing to gather His people.

Jesus embodies empathy by the mere fabric of His life, which we seek after.

But His empathy never led Him to affirm what was contrary to His Father's will. It always led people toward truth, freedom, and restoration.

Over the past several decades, a significant shift has occurred. Empathy, for many, is no longer about understanding someone's experience. At times, it gets reshaped into something that demands agreement. The simple "I see you" can turn into "I must validate you."

When empathy is redefined this way, it starts to take people in a different direction. What starts as understanding becomes agreement, then tolerance, and eventually permissiveness.

I've watched this happen over time. People who once held firmly to what they believe the Scripture teaches, have felt the pressure to walk it back. Not always because they stopped believing it was true, but because they didn't want to be seen as unloving. Accusations, cultural pressure, and painful personal situations have a way of pressing on the heart. Over time, that pressure can cause people to question what they once knew.

These situations are rarely simple. They are often filled with love, fear, misunderstanding, and a deep desire on all sides



to be seen and known. Recently, I spoke with a mother who told me she felt tormented. Her daughter, who was once gay and now identifies as a man, told her she would take her own life if her mother didn't affirm her identity. This is where things become deeply conflicting and painful. What her daughter is asking for begins to function as pressure, and that pressure settles into the heart of a parent who sincerely wants to love well. The demand itself becomes coercive, even though it is framed as a desire for compassion and understanding. Saying this does not mean that someone's pain isn't real or that their experience should be dismissed. It simply means we have to be honest about the weight these expectations can carry in relationships.

We have to be honest about what is happening.

Scripture gives us language for this. For instance, in Romans 1, Paul describes what happens when truth is suppressed. It doesn't happen all at once. It begins with a shift, a willingness to set something aside. Over time, what was once clear becomes questioned, and what was once questioned becomes affirmed.

This is not just something "out there" in the culture. This is something we all have to wrestle with. I'm reminded of Aaron in Exodus 32. The people grew restless. Moses was gone. Fear and uncertainty gripped them. They demanded

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What Is Changing, and Why

As First Stone enters its 50th year of ministry, we do so with deep gratitude for God's faithfulness. For five decades, He has sustained this work, used it to bring help and hope, and carried us through seasons of both clarity and challenge. We are thankful for the many people who have been part of this story, and we do not take lightly the privilege of continuing it.

Over the years, much of our public communication has focused on explaining who we are, what we believe, and where we stand. That work has been important. In a culture where repentance is often dismissed, where sexual behavior is increasingly treated as identity, and where the church has at times struggled to speak clearly and compassionately, it has mattered to name truth with conviction. We have believed, and still believe, that healing is not found in a method, but in a Person—Jesus Christ.

At the same time, the people we want to reach are changing. Many in the younger generations carry real anxiety, relational hesitation, and uncertainty about face-to-face engagement. Some have little church experience, while others have been wounded by it. Many are exploring spirituality without a clear foundation in the gospel. This is a challenge every generation faces: how to carry the enduring truth of the gospel in ways people can truly receive. We do not claim to have all the answers, but we are asking the Lord to guide us.

That is why our new website (soon to be live) and updated public language matter. We remain a robust resource of articles, testimonies, and position papers. That part of our ministry is not going away. But the way these resources are presented is changing. We are shaping a softer on-ramp, using warmer language, and placing less emphasis on defending our existence. We want our public presence

to feel more invitational and clearly centered on ministry, compassion, and help.

We are not stepping away from biblical conviction. We are seeking to communicate that conviction in ways that are more accessible to those who need it most. This includes removing some overtly political language and reducing language that was once necessary to defend our place. We want people with questions to feel welcomed immediately. Our old tone sometimes kept distance with warnings and pushback; now we're aiming for the kind of place that says, "Bring your whole story here and we'll meet you with compassion and truth."

We are also making important changes internally. In our groups and intake process, we are moving away from self-assessments and toward a more intentional process of discipling identity through Scripture and the indwelling Spirit of God. We want people to encounter more than information or categories. We want them to encounter formation. Our desire is to help people understand who they are in Christ and to walk with them patiently as that truth takes root.

We are grateful for what God has built through so many years of ministry. By His grace, that work has given us a strong foundation to serve from. As we continue to build on that foundation, we ask for your prayers that we would speak with clarity, lead with compassion, and faithfully point people to the freedom and cleansing found in Jesus Christ.

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father. They understood the weight of the decision before him and offered wise guidance. He also consulted his peers. In the end, he rejected the counsel of the elders and followed the advice that aligned with his instincts and his friends. The outcome was costly.

It is too easy to rely on what seems wise in the moment—on knowledge, experience, or even strong conviction. I often feel that pull myself. Those things matter, but they are not enough on their own. I want to continue growing as someone who seeks the Lord, listens carefully, and receives counsel with humility.

As a ministry, we are committed to that same posture as we make decisions and look ahead. We want to be people who seek the Lord together, who listen well, and who move forward with humility and clarity as He leads.

We are considering how to serve the next generation with clarity and compassion while also honoring the faithfulness and strength of those who have carried this ministry for many years. We are asking the Lord how the shape of our ministry may continue to grow and adapt so that we remain faithful to our calling in the years ahead.

We are committed to continuing to listen carefully, move thoughtfully, and trust Him to lead us.

As we mark this milestone year, our desire is simple: to remain a people who depend on Him.

Would you join us in praying for wisdom, unity, and clear direction as we take these next steps?

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Events

Same-Sex Connection™ Seminar

Online | Saturday, May 30, 2026 | 9am - 3:30pm CDT

Understand SSA Like Never Before



husbandmaterial.com/same-sex-connection

HOPE Conference

June 12-13, 2026

Focus on the Family Headquarters
Colorado Springs, Colorado



restoredhopenetwork.org/hopeconf

gods to lead them. Aaron didn't stand firm. He yielded to the pressure and helped fashion the golden calf.

This came from weakness, not strength.

And it led to destruction.

That story lingers because it forces a hard question: Are we, in our desire to love well, yielding to pressures that harm the people we care about?

Are we saying yes to things we know are not true because we feel the weight of being seen as unloving if we don't?



It's not a simple place to stand, especially when it involves our children, our family, or people we deeply care about.

Scripture does not leave us without guidance. In 1 Corinthians 13, we are told that love "does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth." That means love and truth are not in competition with each other. They belong together.

So, what does that look like in real life?

I think it sounds something like this:

"I see you."

"You matter."

"I care deeply about you."

"And because I love you enough to always be a person of truth, I cannot step outside of what God has said."

That kind of love is not easy. It doesn't remove the tension. It doesn't always resolve the relationship the way we hope it will. But it keeps us anchored in Christ.

God has not asked us to choose between truth and love. He has called us to live and walk in both.

I am still learning what that looks like, and I know I don't always get it right. I am still asking the Lord how to love people well without stepping outside of His truth. I don't have every answer, but I do know this:

Empathy, when it is separated from truth, does not lead where we hope it will.

But when it is anchored in truth, it can point people to Jesus, who is full of grace, mercy and truth.

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Updated Website Launching April 30th

After more than a year of thoughtful planning, design, and development, we're excited to introduce our newly refreshed website. It's been carefully redesigned to be more user-friendly, visually engaging, and aligned with our ministry's mission and heart. You'll discover improved navigation, expanded access to resources, and updated content created to support healing, growth, and transformation. Our hope is that this space serves you well and helps you easily find what you need. Thank you for your patience, encouragement, and for being part of our journey.



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Mission

Offering hope in Christ Jesus to people encountering sexual and relational sin and brokenness, and those who love them, through compassionate, biblically faithful care.

We minister by

Empowering people to escape isolation and flourish in their personal lives and families by offering biblical guidance and relational tools that reveal freedom from sexual and relational sin is not a method or program but found in Jesus Christ. We specialize in ministering to those with unwanted same-sex attraction, sexual behaviors, and identities—tested over 50 years, we've walked hundreds from unwanted same-sex attraction and broken patterns into lasting freedom and healthy relationships.

We educate by

Assisting churches, ministry leaders, and loved ones to navigate pornography culture, fallen leader scandals, and identity confusion with biblical clarity and compassionate wisdom, equipping them to understand, engage confidently, and walk alongside those impacted by sexual and relational sin and brokenness.

First Stone Ministries'

Mission Statement

Meetings



Quarterly Prayer Meetings

FRIDAYS
FRIDAYS
FRIDAYS
FRIDAYS

~~January 9th, 2026~~
~~April 10th, 2026~~
July 10th, 2026
October 9th, 2026

bit.ly/prayer-rsvp



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1 CORINTHIANS
15:58

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1ST MONDAY online 3RD FRIDAY in person

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STARTING SEPTEMBER 22, 2026
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Staff

For more information about each staff member, including links to any blogs, please visit firststone.org/staff.



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the healing grace of Jesus Christ —
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