



Christian Challenger

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REV ERIN TAYLOR JOINS FCC STAFF



Welcome to Rev. Erin Taylor who joined the FCC staff on September 1 as Director of Common Ground Ministries. Rev. Dave Brummett is preparing to retire effective September 30 after 6 years of faithful leadership of our recovery ministries. Dave and Erin will work together this month to ensure a smooth leadership transition.

Erin is a native of Lake Charles, Louisiana. As a TCU Horned Frog, she earned undergraduate degrees in Religion and Social Work. In May Erin completed graduate studies at TCU/Brite Divinity School with dual degrees—Master of Divinity and Master of Social Work.

Erin's ministry experience includes an internship with Union Gospel Mission in Fort Worth. She led life skills groups for men experiencing homelessness, tutored elementary school children, designed and implemented a college-readiness program, and conducted research to evaluate Mission programs. Erin is a licensed social worker.

Erin has served First Christian Church in Gainesville as Youth Minister since 2012. Since she will be employed part-time as Director of Common Ground Ministries, she plans to continue her ministry with Gainesville youth.

We talked with Erin recently about this new chapter in her ministry...

Welcome to First Christian Church, Erin! Tell us what makes Director of Common Ground Ministries a good fit for you?

Thank you! In a nutshell (or coffee bean...), Common Ground Ministries is a great fit for me because I love working with people through the most difficult times in their lives and helping them find hope.

What part of your training in ministry and social work has been most satisfying for you?

THE STORIES. I LOVE hearing people's stories and learning about their resiliency, what they're passionate about, and hearing their hopes and dreams. In the hearing and sharing of these stories, we can see the ways God has worked in one another's lives.

What is the advantage of a recovery program that is an extension of the ministry of a congregation?

It gives the church an excellent opportunity to do what Jesus calls us to do in the community - to reach out to

those who are marginalized and to invite the Holy Spirit to work within the darkest, most uncertain situations.

Tell us what goals you have set for your first 90 days on the job.

Some of my goals for the first 90 days on the job are to come up with definite fundraising events, publicize the successes of Common Ground, and to build community partnerships. Having recently moved to the area, I am not yet familiar with the various social service agencies in the community and I am looking forward to establishing relationships with not just the church, but the community as a whole.



DINNER FOR DOMINICA STUDENTS

Thanks to all who helped with the dinner Friday night for 36 young people from Dominica. A crack team from Disciples Men, Discovery Sunday School class, and Outreach Ministry members served a meal of chicken, rice, squash, and watermelon. Extra food was sent home with the grateful students. Catholic Charities sent representatives to assess ongoing needs of families of the hurricane that hit the island. Money has been collected to give Walmart gift cards to the 63 Dominica students who have lost funding from home.

FACE TIME Sunday at 6

FACE Time (for Faith and Current Events) will meet this Sunday at 6 pm in the parlor. The primary topic will be a proposed re-stating of our existing wedding policy. After prayer and deliberation over a period of three weeks, the Elders unanimously recommended the inclusion of the sentence, "The wedding ministry of First Christian Church culminates in a service of Holy Matrimony, which is a solemn and public covenant between a man and a woman in the presence of God." The inclusion was approved (though not unanimously) at a meeting of the Worship Ministry and will be considered by the Executive Council at its regularly-scheduled meeting on September 22. All viewpoints are welcome this Sunday. It is important that as brothers and sisters in Christ, we hear each other in the spirit of deep respect and mutual love and strive, in all ways and in all things, to be guided by the Holy Spirit.

Across Dave's Desk...

THE LITTLE BOY ON THE BEACH



Alan Kurdi on his last birthday

They are almost unbearable to look at. I'm speaking of the photos that show the body of 3 year old Alan Kurdi on a beach in Turkey. He had drowned, along with his mother Rehanna and older brother Ghalib, as his family tried to flee to Europe. Those photos are available online. I have no heart to replicate them here. This picture is of Alan on his last birthday—a little boy, filled with joy, who was meant, were the world a just place, to grow up and live the life God intended for him while he was being knit together in his mother's womb.

His family was from Kobani, a predominantly Kurdish town near the Turkish border that has endured months of heavy fighting between ISIS and Kurdish defense forces. Some of you may remember the images from last September of Turkish tanks posted on a promontory above Kobani, doing nothing as ISIS relentlessly assaulted the town and its outgunned defenders. ISIS was driven back only by the just-in-time support given the Kurds by the U.S. Air Force.

When the Syrian civil war began, Alan's father Abdullah was a barber in Damascus. When the Assad regime began committing atrocities against civilians—Abdullah was reportedly tortured—the family fled to Aleppo. When the Free Syrian Army, the original source of resistance to Assad, was superseded by radical Islamist groups like the Al Nusra Front, Aleppo became a catchphrase for urban devastation on a scale not seen since Stalingrad. The Kurdi family fled again, this time to Kobani, Abdullah's hometown. When the war again encroached, the family slipped across the border into Turkey, where Abdullah worked as a construction worker for \$17 a day. In order to subsist, the family relied on money sent by his sister Tima in Canada.

The family had hoped to begin a new life in Canada, but another brother had already been denied asylum there. Abdullah suffered from serious dental and periodontal disease, perhaps as a consequence of his torture. His father, still in Syria, urged him to go to Europe for treatment. Abdullah would not leave without his wife and children, so Tima began to wire them up to \$1100 a month to procure passage. They set off on a 15 foot-long boat that would take them from the Turkish resort of Bodrum to the Greek island of Kos. A few moments after embarking, it was swamped by high waves. According to Abdullah, the captain panicked and dove overboard, and then the boat flipped over. Abdullah said he tried to hold his wife and children afloat, but could not. Their bodies were found the next morning. In one interview, he said that he made it to shore and walked to the hospital. In another, he said the coast guard rescued him.

Regardless of the discrepancies in his story, what is clear is that two precious children and their mother drowned in a vain attempt to flee to Europe because their homeland had become almost totally devoid of hope. According to the United Nations Refugee Agency, the war in Syria has produced over 4 million refugees. The majority are female; over half of them are 17 or younger. 1.9 million of them are in Turkey, 1.2 million in Lebanon, and 630,000 are in Jordan. Egypt and Iraq also have

substantial refugee populations, while Europe is struggling to cope with the largest influx of displaced people since World War II. By contrast, Saudi Arabia and the wealthy Gulf kingdoms of Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates have accepted no refugees. Last week, Saudi King Salman paid his first official visit to the White House. His entourage booked all 222 rooms in Georgetown's luxurious Four Seasons Hotel. Witnesses told Politico magazine that much of the hotel's furniture was replaced with "gold end tables, gold mirrors and gold lamps." Given that most of the ideological poison that has spawned Al Qaeda and ISIS arose out of the official Saudi version of Islam called Wahhabism, and pumped into Salafist mosques and madrassas by Saudi petrodollars, that sybaritic display is more than unseemly—it is obscene. But the United States can not take the moral high ground on Syria. The fecklessness of American policy has contributed mightily to the calamity, with solemnly avowed "red lines" turning pinkish before disappearing.

Over my years of ministry, I have had the privilege of serving congregations that sponsored refugees from Vietnam, Haiti, Ukraine, Poland and Bosnia. First Christian of Wichita Falls has also sponsored a refugee family; the mother is a beloved local physician. Churches are uniquely equipped and motivated to welcome refugees and help them assimilate; because Jesus taught that anyone who welcomed a stranger was welcoming him.

Last year, our Persecuted Church ministry team sought to sponsor a refugee family. Lamentably, State Department policy currently decrees that no church more than 50 miles away from an accredited resettlement agency can provide such sponsorship. The nearest agency to us is in Fort Worth. The others in Texas are in Dallas, Houston, Austin and Amarillo. Pope Francis has called on every Catholic parish in Europe to sponsor at least one refugee family. Such open-heartedness is not permissible in Wichita Falls or, indeed, most of Texas. Denied the nurture of thousands of local churches because of these geographical restrictions, most refugees now cluster in or near large cities, often in apartment blocks leased by the sponsoring agency. More than a few—notably Somalis in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area—have chosen to return to Somalia and take up arms with Al Qaeda's affiliate, Al Shabaab. Being consigned to a ghetto in a megalopolis does nothing to inspire love of a host country.

The death of little Alan Kurdi is desperately sad. But millions more of God's children also face dispossession and death. For all the scorn deservedly heaped on Saudi Arabia and the Gulf kingdoms, fewer than 1000 Syrian refugees are in the United States, a country whose ideals about refugee resettlement are emblazoned on the Statue of Liberty. If you feel so led, the website of Church World Service has a petition to the White House calling for the admission of 65,000 refugees from Syria. I have signed it. Our Persecuted Church Ministry team will consider new avenues to amend State Department policy to allow more expansive resettlement of refugee families. While no country can take in all of another's "huddled masses," ours could do much more. Or at least the churches could, were we allowed to do what Jesus Christ called for us to do.

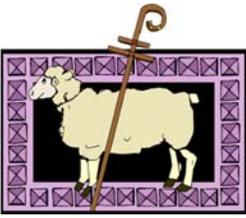
DAVE

Prayer: Almighty and merciful God, turn the hearts, or stop the hands, of those who afflict your children. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

MEMBER NEWS

♥Hospitalized: at URHCS is Sherrie Phillips. Released and back home are Ann Cocke & Joye Thompson.

♥Congratulations to Caroline & Brett Hairston on the birth of their daughter, Evie Margaret Hairston, on August 24th in Dallas TX. Evie Margaret weighed 6 lbs 4oz. Proud grandparents are Peggy & Ty Puckett and great-grandparents are Jean Puckett and the late Bob Puckett.



FEED MY FLOCK

Will be cooking this Saturday, Sept. 12th, at 9:30am to help provide food for the 63 international students at Midwestern who are short of funds due to the recent tropical storm that passed over the Commonwealth of Dominica. If you would like to help, please call the church office at 692-2282 or email Rick Appling at rappling52@yahoo.com. Hope you can join us!

JOURNEY THROUGH SCRIPTURE

Coming this Sunday, Sept. 13th, in the Church Parlor, at 9:45 AM, a "Brand New" journey led by Larry Spradley will begin. Adult Travelers will have the opportunity to take a trip through three World Religions--Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The goal of the journey is to better understand these three religions, as well as, to learn their relation--both similarities and differences. All interested travelers are urged to come make this journey from 9:45 AM to 10:30 AM Sundays.

PERSECUTED CHURCH

The Prayer Team for the Persecuted Church will meet on Tuesday, September 15th, at 5:00 pm in Room 310.



SEPTEMBER MINISTRY MEETINGS

Tuesday, September 15, 2015
6:00 pm, Fellowship & Scout Halls
Education, Evangelism, Membership, Stewardship,
& World Outreach

Not Meeting:
Worship

If you will need childcare, please RSVP to the church office, 692-2282, by noon on Monday, September 14.

WOMEN'S FALL BIBLE STUDY *Daniel (A Beth Moore Study)*

Part 2 of the Beth Moore study, *Daniel*, will begin on Wednesday, September 16th, at 10:00 am and will continue through October 28. We will meet in Room 310. The study will be led by Sheri Sutton.

We began Part 1 of the study, *Lives of Integrity*, last spring focusing on the first six chapters of Daniel. Chapters 7-12 will take us through Part 2, *Words of Prophecy*. We will visit the extremely detailed prophecies of Daniel in which God opens the near and distant future to the prophet's gaze.

The Book of Daniel and the prophecies conveyed gave added confidence to the people that God was truly in charge of history. Come and join us as we continue this fascinating study.

Please call the church office, 692-2282, to register.

OPEN FLOWER DATES

If you would like to donate the flowers for the worship service in the Sanctuary, the following dates are open: **September 20 & 27**. To donate or for more info, call Peggy Fitts, Flower Coordinator, 781-2426.



Maris Cate Moran & Lennox Clark Haleck were dedicated on August 30th during the 10:45 worship service.

Pictured on the left is Maris Cate with her parents, Dr. Nathan & Carla Moran, and her grandmother, Leigh Kidwell.

Pictured on the right is Lennox Clark with her parents, Michelle & Makisi Haleck, sister, Leila Rose, and Dr. David Hartman.

CHURCH LIBRARY USED BOOK SALE

The Church Library will host a Used Book Sale to benefit our library's collection on Sunday, September 27th, during the Sunday School hour, 9:30-10:30 am, in the hallway outside the Library. Books will be sold by donations.

GOLF TOURNAMENT



Have you played golf lately or never? Well that's too long! This is your opportunity to play with friends and family of the church on Sunday, September 27th, at 3pm at River Creek Golf Course. You will have a chance of winning farthest from the pin, closest to the tee box, blindfold putt! Sign up at the church office, and no need to practice. We also need volunteers to help keep the game on track and fun. For more information contact Gary Cook, 767-4900.

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James Irl & Dot Montgomery celebrate their anniversary (68 years!) at the Prime Timers Luncheon on September 6th!

FIRST TIME VISITORS
We are excited to report that the following persons visited for the first time on Sunday: Noresha Jayasundara, & Jeff Lathrop.

SERVING SUNDAY

ELDERS

Kerry Roach, Eddie Tucker, Emily Wilson, Presiding

DIACONATE COMMUNION VISITATION

Sherry Tucker, Travis Ralls, Brandi Brannon

DIACONATE COMMUNION PREPARATION

Sherry Tucker & Donna Long

SEPTEMBER DIACONATE SERVERS

Fred Gentry, Sandy Hay, Liz & Tim Thomas, Brandi & Jody Brannon, Donna Long, Travis Ralls, Sherry Tucker, Philip Dudenhoeffer, Catherine Earley, Amy James, Sarah Stewart, Luke Machado, Madi Showalter.

This Sunday:

8:40 & 10:45 Services:

"Does Your Cross Fit"

Mark 8:27-38

Dr. David B. Hartman, Jr.

5:14 CGRM Worship Service:

Rev. Erin Taylor

OPPORTUNITIES

Sunday, September 13, 2015

- 8:40 Worship (Chapel)
- 9:30 Sunday School
- 9:45 Journey Through Scripture (Parlor)
- 10:45 Worship (Sanctuary)
- 3:45 Chancel Ringers (Stratten Hall)
- 5:00 Grow in Grace Choir (Grades K-5) (Stratten Hall)
- 5:00 Come As You Are (Grades 6-12) (Rm 403C)
- 5:14 CGRM Evening Ministry (Fellowship Hall)
- 5:45 Young Disciples Group (Grades K-5) (Rm 309 & 311)
- 6:00 FACE Time with Dave (Parlor)
- 6:00 Common Ground Recovery Ministries Support Groups:
 - Anger Recovery (Rm 304)
 - Chemical Addictions Recovery (Rm 305)
 - Parenting (Rm 306)
 - Women's C.A.R.E. (Rm 307)
 - Family Challenges (Rm 310)

Monday, September 14, 2014

- 7:30-6:00 Children Come First (M-F)
- 9:00-12:00 Young Ages School (M-F)
- 10:15 FCC Staff Mtg (Office)
- 10:30 CWF Board Mtg (Rm 310)
- 11:45 CWF Luncheon (Fellowship Hall)
- 4:30 CCF Staff Mtg (Rm 402)
- 7:30 Boy Scouts Troop 15 (Fellowship Hall)

Tuesday, September 15, 2015

- 2:00 Library Committee (Library)
- 5:00 Prayer Team for Persecuted Church (Rm 310)
- 6:00 Ministries Meetings (Fellowship Hall)
(Education, Evangelism, Membership, Stewardship, World Outreach)

Wednesday, September 16, 2015

- 7:00 Elders' Breakfast (Rm 402/Chapel)
- 10:00 Women's Fall Bible Study (Rm 310)
- 5:00 Mid-Week Communion Service (Chapel)

FEAST BEGINS:

- 5:30-6:00 Fellowship Meal (Fellowship Hall)
 - 6:00-7:00 **360** (Grades 6-12) (Rm 403C)
 - Young Disciples Group (Grades K-5) (Rm 309 & 311)
 - Adult Bible Studies:
 - "Too Busy Not To Pray" (Rm 310)
 - "What We Talk About When We Talk About God" (Rm 402)
 - 7:00-7:15 Communion & Prayer (Fellowship Hall)
 - 7:00-8:30 Chancel Choir (High School-Adults) (Stratten Hall)
 - 7:15-8:00 Open Gym
- ### Thursday, September 17, 2015
- 9:00 CWF Group 3 Birthday Breakfast (IHOP-SW Pkwy)
 - 1:30 Knit Wits (Parlor)

THE CHURCH STAFF . . .

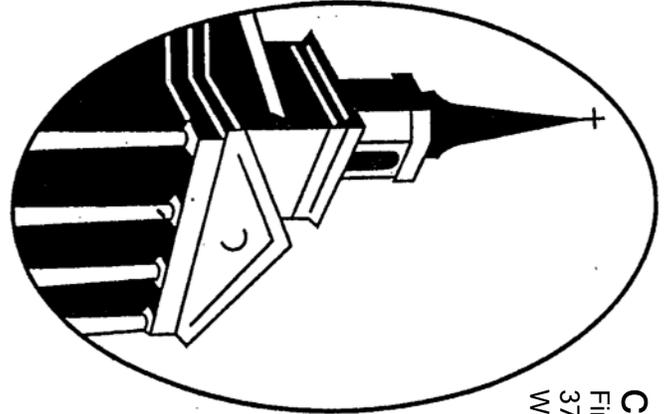
Church Number	940-692-2282
Dr. David Hartman, Senior Minister	692-2282
Rev. Renee Hoke, Associate Minister	692-2282
Jeanette Showalter, Director of Music Ministries	763-8515
Justin Dickey, Director of Youth & Children's Ministries	936-645-1215
Cheryl Appling, Business Administrator	691-7265
Rev. Dave Brummett, Director of Recovery Ministries	613-2112
Heather Dickerson, Director of Children Come First	687-2231
Karen Bivona, Director of Young Ages School	692-3640
Susan Marrs, Executive Secretary	Tina Williams, Financial Secretary
Pam Poulos, Receptionist	Debbie Watson, Organist
Web Page: www.firstchristianwf.com	Church e-mail: susan@firstchristianwf.com
FAX Number 940-696-3085	

FOR THE RECORD . . .

Sunday School	71
8:40 Worship . . . 45	10:45 Worship . . .181
Total Worship	226
CGRM Evening Ministry	19
Sunday Receipts Needed Per Week	\$16,698.52
Sunday Receipts for 9/6/15	\$10,977.75
Through Sept. 30: Income \$512,215.69	Expenses \$529,947.25

PERSECUTED CHURCH PRAYERS THIS WEEK ARE FOR:

Pray for the growth and encouragement of Maldivian believers, who have no churches and are extremely isolated.



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