



# Christian Challenger

Vol. 63

January 20, 2016

NO. 3



## LOVING OUR NEIGHBORS: A Family Adventure

A family visit over the Christmas break turned into a mission outing for Larry and Linda Carr and their extended family. Daughter Melanie and her family live in Rockwall which was hard hit by a tornado the day after Christmas. By the time Larry and Linda arrived on December 29, local recovery efforts were in full swing.

Helping Hands of Rockwall County was accepting clothing donations at the local middle school. What a perfect time for a faith-in-action field trip! Larry, Linda, Melanie and daughters Madelyn (age 12) and Brinlee (age 10) piled into the car and headed to Walmart to purchase items for the clothing drive. Next they delivered their donations to the middle school where they were overwhelmed to see the response from the community. So overwhelmed, in fact, that they stayed on site helping to organize the donations.

"It was such a blessing for us to see the outpouring of love and support for families who had lost everything," Linda said.

Madelyn and Brinlee agreed. "It was awesome. It was amazing to help others."

## MISSION TRIP FUNDRAISER LUNCHEON

This Sunday, January 24, 2016

at 12:00 noon

in the Fellowship Hall

Menu: Baked Chicken, Baked Potatoes, Green Beans, Salad & Dessert

Cost is by donation

Make your reservations by calling the church office, 692-2282

## Across Dave's Desk...



Comet Hale-Bopp, shortly after passing perihelion, April, 1997

### WHEN GOD USES SCIENCE, Part I

*Note: This series of "Across Dave's Desk" columns is basically a much-expanded version of the Epiphany sermon given on January 3, 2016. That means there was lots and lots of stuff Dave wanted to say about the subject, but didn't, because three-hour sermons are rarely appreciated.*

Religion and science—what is the relationship? Do they occupy two totally different realms? Or could religion and science constitute another Biblical binary, like heaven and earth, male and female, law and grace, crucifixion and resurrection? Consider the account of the magi from Matthew 2:

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage...' Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was.

Among other things, the scripture concerns a group of scientists (though they wouldn't have used that term) who observed a striking celestial event and chose to seek out its meaning. The wise men—the magi—were, in all likelihood, Zoroastrian priests from the Parthian Empire, who were inspired by both their religion and their science to make a long trek to the side of the infant Jesus in Bethlehem.

Though Zoroastrianism was not a monotheistic religion, it was morally serious. The magi were also accomplished stargazers, finding meaning in the movements of the planets and the stars. They beheld a celestial phenomenon—something that looked like a star, but didn't behave like one—that persuaded them to strike out to find the newborn King of the Jews. What was it?

A Cambridge professor and astronomer named Colin Nicholl argues in his recently published "The Great Christ Comet," that the star of Bethlehem was a great comet, like Hale-Bopp, which was visible for almost a year in 1996-1997. In an interview in *Christianity Today*, Nichol said

The star appeared suddenly and was visible for over a year, something that makes sense only if it were a supernova or a great comet. That the star surprised the Magi with its impressive "rising" points strongly to it being a comet: Of all the celestial bodies, only comets behave in this manner. (*Rising* refers to the period when a celestial body re-emerges on the horizon after being hidden by the Sun.)

Then you take into account the star's movement, in the space of a couple of months, from the eastern morning sky to the southern evening sky, where they see it when they're traveling from Jerusalem to Bethlehem. That kind of movement is only possible for an object in the inner solar system, meaning that the star had to be a comet.

There's another, more complicated possibility. In 7 B.C. there was a conjunction of the planet Jupiter, considered the royal star, and the planet Saturn, which was thought to be a special star for the people of Mesopotamia; indeed, the prophet Amos denounced the Israelites for turning away from God, and worshipping Saturn as a star god known as *Kaiwan* [Amos 5.26]. The conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, which occurred three times in 7 B.C., appeared in the constellation Pisces. Pisces, the fish, was considered the special constellation of the Jews. That occurrence—a triple conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in the constellation Pisces—occurs only once every 900 years. Whether the Bethlehem star was a comet or a conjunction, it is quite feasible that these stargazing magi should conclude that this was a sign in the heavens that the King of the Jews had been born, and to wonder if he might be their own long-prophesied *Sosyant*, or Savior. What kind of convoluted sign was this? Maybe a strange one for scientific 21st Century types, but if you read your daily horoscope, you are using much the same data. Even though the science that led them to Jesus' side is far outdated, God reveals things to us through the tools we have at hand, which includes contemporary science. But scientific understandings are always changing, always evolving. That is why, if the Church weds the science of any age, she will find herself a widow the next. That said, we are enthralled by the story of the wise men not because of the science they used, but because of their journey to the side of Christ.

When does God use science? When does God not? Last week, I prayed with the family of one of our beloved members that his impending surgery would be a means of his healing—surgery that was itself a modern scientific marvel. Both religion and science ask, "Why are things the way they are? What language can we use to describe the things that we observe?" Science does not answer every question we have about the world, but neither does religion. Oxford's Alister McGrath, a molecular biologist and devout Christian, says that "Science asks the 'how' questions, while religion asks the 'why.' Science seeks to clarify mechanisms; religions offer meaning." Both scientists and people of faith share a common vocation: to follow the truth wherever it leads. Sometimes their paths converge. *[To be continued]*

*DAVE*

*Prayer: Almighty and loving God, make us wise to discern your ways, in both natural and revealed law; in Jesus' Name, Amen.*

**F** **A** **C** **E**  
**ith** **nd** **urrent** **vents**  
**TIME**  
*with Dave*  
 This Sunday, January 24th,  
 at 6:00 pm in the Parlor

**PASTOR'S CLASS TO BEGIN  
 SUNDAY, JANUARY 31**

An 8-week long Pastor's Class for young persons in grades 3-8, who are interested in learning more about the Christian faith and what it means to take Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, will meet on Sundays, beginning January 31 through March 20, from 4-5 pm in Room 310.

Each student will be paired with an adult mentor who will guide him or her during class. Students who are led to do so will have the opportunity to make a confession of faith on Palm Sunday and be baptized on Easter Sunday morning.

Young persons who are interested in taking the class are encouraged to talk to their parents and call the church office, 692-2282, to sign up.

**TCU Scholarships**

The Phillips University Foundation's Legacy Scholars program offers scholarships and leadership training to outstanding full-time undergraduate students pursuing a liberal arts education at any of the 17 colleges or universities affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Annual renewable tuition scholarships of up to \$5,000 are based upon academic achievements and leadership in their church, community and academic environments.

Phillips University, Inc. is adding a **Seminary Scholarship** program this year for students pursuing a Masters of Divinity degree who will attend one of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) seminaries.

Application deadline for the undergraduate scholarships is March 10. Contact [scholarships@pulf.org](mailto:scholarships@pulf.org)

\*\*\*\*\*  
 \* **OPEN FLOWER DATES** \*  
 \* If you would like to donate the flowers for the \*  
 \* worship service in the Sanctuary, the following dates \*  
 \* are open: **January 24 & 31**. To donate or for more info, \*  
 \* call Peggy Fitts, Flower Coordinator, 781-2426. \*  
 \*\*\*\*\*

**CHRISTIAN MEN'S FELLOWSHIP DINNER**

Wednesday, January 27, 2016  
 6:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall  
 Program: State Senator Craig Estes on the Texas Legislature and how his job relates to his Christian walk.

**MARY SUE WINSTEAD COATS FOR KIDS**

In November our congregation gave the gift of warm coats to 556 elementary students. Each January the Coats for Kids committee starts to prepare for this project by shopping the after Christmas sales. The shoppers have begun to check stores for bargains. Your generous donations make this project possible. Donations to this on-going project are encouraged during the month of January. Sunday, January 31, during the Church School hour we will have a Potluck Coats for Kids Celebration Breakfast.

**MEMBER NEWS**

♥**Hospitalized:** at URHCS is Richard McQuiston; at Senior Care Rehab is Corliss Wyatt; at Health South Rehab is Doris Robbins & Dr. Donald Terry; at UT Southwestern-Dallas is Emily Strickland Villegas. Released and back home is Jim Zug.

♥Our sympathies are extended to Madi & Taylor Showalter on learning of the death of their grandfather, Donald Mac Richardson, on January 15 in Big Springs TX.

♥We extend our condolences to Madra & Susan Marrs on learning of the death of their sister & aunt, Margilee Cooley, on January 15 in San Marcos TX.

*We want to be as inclusive as possible with our Member News, so if you know about an honor someone received, an important event in someone's life, or about illness or death, please call the church-692-2282. Thanks!*

👤 👤 👤 👤 👤 👤 👤 👤 👤 👤 👤 👤 👤 👤 👤  
 👤  
**FIRST TIME VISITORS**  
 👤 We are excited to report that the following persons  
 👤 visited for the first time this past Sunday: Jordan  
 👤 Brad, Sandeep Petla; J.J., Dakota & Jay  
 👤 Schweiger; & Baylee Wechlan.  
 👤 👤 👤 👤 👤 👤 👤 👤 👤 👤 👤 👤 👤 👤 👤

**OFFERING ENVELOPES**

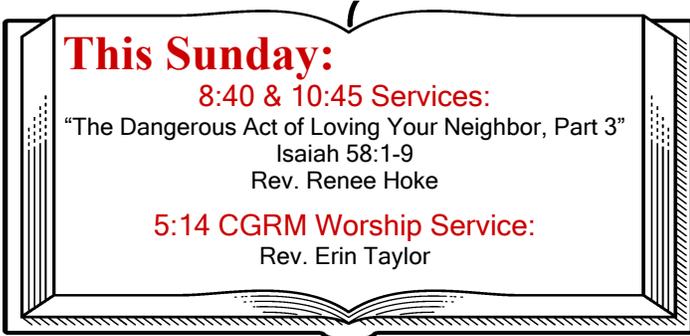
If you requested offering envelopes for 2016 they are now available for you to pick up from the counter behind the front desk in the church office. If you didn't request envelopes and would some, please call Financial Secretary Tina Williams in the church office, 692-2282.



**ITS THAT TIME AGAIN!**

Quarts of frozen, homemade soups will be available for order through January 31<sup>st</sup> and available for pick-up or delivery (upon request) on Super bowl Sunday, February 7<sup>th</sup> after both services and during Sunday school and the following week! Checks can be made out to First Christian Church!

Soups available this year include Chicken Noodle, Chicken Tortilla, and Baked Potato all for sale at \$10 a quart! Be sure to place your order before time runs out! Orders can be placed with the Church Office or with Justin Dickey no later than January 31<sup>st</sup>! All proceeds benefit the 2016 Youth Mission Trip! Thank you for all of your continued support for the Jr/Sr. High youth here at First Christian Church!



**SERVING SUNDAY  
ELDERS**

Ted Lauck, Craig Reynolds; Kenn Hill, Presiding  
**DIACONATE COMMUNION VISITATION**  
 Cathy Biggs, Philip Dudenhoefler, Shirley Craft  
**DIACONATE COMMUNION PREPARATION**  
 Curtis Sullivan & Ainslee Buckley

**JANUARY DIACONATE SERVERS**

Debi & Larry Ballard, Vicki Kunkle, Robinsue Miller, Curtis Sullivan, Sherry Tucker, Cathy Biggs, Philip Dudenhoefler, Claudine Farrell, Amy James, Andrew Allen, Bob & Mary Carlton, Colleen James, Sandra Ross, Diane Spiller, Ainslee Buckley, Luke Machado.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

Sunday, January 24, 2016

- 8:40 Worship (Chapel)
- 9:30 Sunday School
- 9:45 Journey Through Scripture (Parlor)
- 10:45 Worship (Sanctuary)
- 12:00 Youth Mission Trip Fundraiser Luncheon (Fellowship Hall)
- 3:45 Chancel Ringers (Stratten Hall)
- NO Grow in Grace Choir (Grades K-5) (Stratten Hall)
- 5:00 Come As You Are (Grades 6-12) (Room 403C)
- 5:14 CGRM Evening Ministry (Fellowship Hall)
- NO Young Disciples (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)
- 7:00 CGRM Dinner (Fellowship Hall)

Monday, January 25, 2016

- 7:30-6:00 Children Come First (M-F)
- 9:00-12:00 Young Ages School (MT-F)
- 10:15 FCC Staff Meeting (Office)
- 6:00 CGRM Continuing Education (Rm 307)
- 7:30 Boy Scouts Troop 15 (Fellowship Hall)

Tuesday, January 26, 2016

- 2:00 Library Committee (Library)
- 6:00 Executive Council Dinner & Meeting (Parlor)

Wednesday, January 27, 2016

- 7:00 Elders' Breakfast (Rm 402/Chapel)
- 5:00 Mid-Week Communion Service (Chapel)
- 5:30-6:00 Feast Fellowship Meal (Rm 402/405)
- 6:00-7:00 Feast Small Groups:
  - Young Disciples Group (Grades K-5) (Rm 309 & 311)
  - 360 (Grades 6-12) (Rm 403C)
  - Adult Bible Study (Rm 305)

- 6:30 Christian Men's Fellowship Dinner (Fellowship Hall)
- 7:00-7:15 Feast Communion & Prayer (Chapel)
- 7:00-8:30 Chancel Choir (High School-Adults) (Stratten Hall)
- 7:15-8:00 Feast Open Gym
- 8:15-9:30 FCC Boys Basketball League Team Practice (Gym)

Thursday, January 28, 2016

- 1:30 Knit Wits (Parlor)
- 6:00-10:00 Boys Basketball League Games (Gym)

**THE CHURCH STAFF . . .**

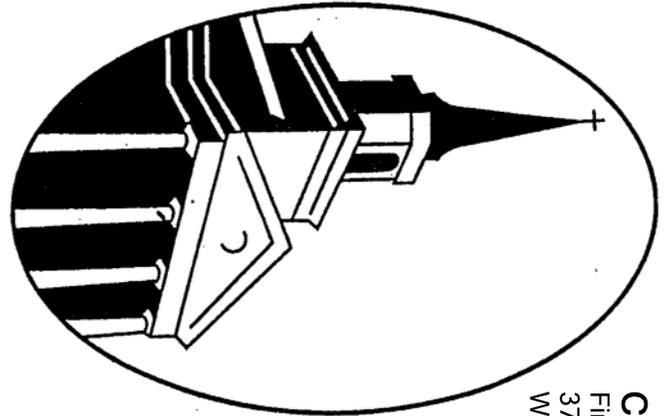
Church Number	940-692-2282
Dr. David Hartman, Senior Minister	692-2282
Rev. Renee Hoke, Associate Minister	692-2282
Cheryl Appling, Business Administrator	691-7265
Jeanette Showalter, Director of Music Ministries	763-8515
Justin Dickey, Director of Youth & Children's Ministries	936-645-1215
Rev. Erin Taylor, Director of Recovery Ministries	337-304-3038
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 . . . . .	118
8:40 Worship . . . 45	10:45 Worship . . . 219
Total Worship . . . . . 264	
CGRM: Sunday Evening Ministry . . . 24	
Sunday Receipts Needed Per Week	\$16,698.52
Sunday Receipts for 1/17/16	\$14,011.59
Through Jan. 18: Income \$32,839.59	Expenses \$36,678.47

**PERSECUTED CHURCH PRAYERS  
THIS WEEK ARE FOR:**

Pray that the Tanzania local church will raise up missionaries to share the gospel with the least reached.



**CHRISTIAN CHALLENGER**  
 First Christian Church  
 3701 Taft Boulevard  
 Wichita Falls, Texas 76308

**THE CHRISTIAN CHALLENGER**  
 Pub. No. (USPS 559-820). Published weekly during the school year with exception the last week in December. & in June & July biweekly by First Christian Church, 3701 Taft Blvd., Wichita Falls TX 76308-2315. Periodical postage paid at Wichita Falls TX. POSTMASTER: Send Address Changes to Christian Challenger, 3701 Taft Blvd., Wichita Falls, TX 76308-2315.