

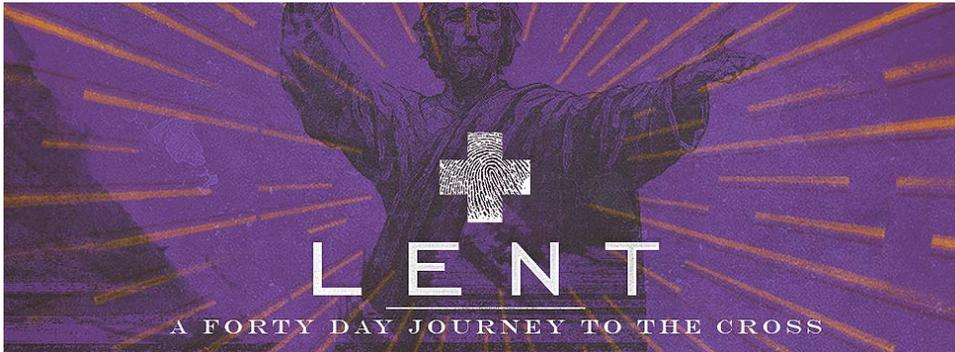


Christian Challenger

Vol. 63

February 10, 2016

NO. 6



SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Disciplines of Abstinence

These are ways of denying ourselves something we want or need in order to make space to focus on and connect with God.

Solitude: Refraining from interacting with other people in order to be alone with God and be found by him. (Solitude is completed by silence.)

Silence: Not speaking in a quiet place in order to quiet our minds and whole self and attend to God's presence. Also, not speaking so that we can listen to others and bless them.

Fasting: Going without food (or something else) for a period of intense prayer — the fast may be complete or partial.

Sabbath: Doing no work to rest in God's person and provision; praying and playing with God and others. (God designed this for one day a week. We can practice it for shorter periods too.)

Secrecy: Not making our good deeds or qualities known to let God or others receive attention and to find our sufficiency in God alone.

Submission: Not asserting ourselves in order to come under the authority, wisdom, and power of Jesus Christ as our Lord, King, and Master.

Disciplines of Engagement

These are ways of connecting with God and other people, conversing honestly with them in order to love and be loved.

Bible Reading: Trusting the Holy Spirit-inspired words of Scripture as our guide, wisdom, and strength for life.

Worship: Praising God's greatness, goodness, and beauty in words, music, ritual, or silence.

Prayer: Conversing with God about what we're experiencing and doing together. (As we see in the Lord's Prayer the main thing we do in prayer is to make requests of our Father for one another.)

Soul Friendship: Engaging fellow disciples of Jesus in prayerful conversation or other spiritual practices.

Personal Reflection: Paying attention to our inner self in order to grow in love for God, others, and self.

Service: Humbly serving God by overflowing with his love and compassion to others, especially those in need.

From *The Spirit of Discipline* by Dallas Willard

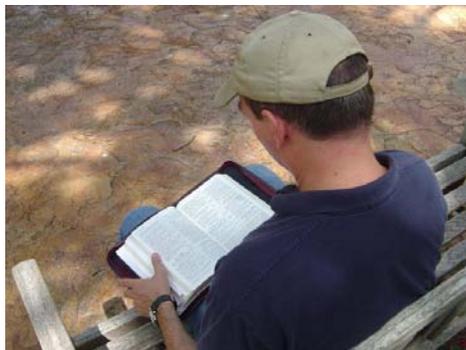
We are called to be signs of God's kingdom in this world. That takes practice. And practice is what the Season of Lent is all about. Beginning with Ash Wednesday, we embark on a journey of repentance and renewal. We follow the life of Jesus, who calls us to put aside the sins and failures of the past in light of who we are yet to become by the grace of God. May this Lenten Season become holy ground for the saints of First Christian Church as we journey together toward the Resurrection.

QUESTIONS FOR LENT

1. When I wake up on Resurrection Sunday morning, how will I be different? What am I preparing for?
2. Is there something in my life—a habit, a grudge, a fear, a prejudice, an addiction, an emotional barrier, a form of excess—that keeps me from loving God with my heart, soul, mind, and strength and loving my neighbor as myself? How might I address that over the next 40 days?
3. Lent is a time to listen to God, but sometimes God speaks through others, particularly the poor, oppressed, marginalized, and suffering. To whom should I be listening this season? How can I cultivate a listening posture toward others whose perspective and experiences might differ from my own?
4. Is there a spiritual discipline that I've always wanted to try? How might I alter my daily routine for the next 40 days to include a new discipline that helps me listen for God?

5. The cycle of death and resurrection is central to the Christian faith. In what ways is that cycle present in my life right now? Where might there be necessary change, suffering, death and decay, and how might new life emerge from those experiences?

--From a blog by Rachel Held Evans



ON BEING A PARADOX Part 3

By Rev. Renee Hoke

Over the last few weeks, we've been exploring the book *Disciples: Reclaiming Our Identity, Reforming Our Practice* by Michael Kinnamon and Jan Linn.

Regarding our identity, we have learned that Disciples have been a paradox from the very beginning. We are both a *church* and a *reforming movement* for Christian unity. This paradox has caused identity confusion, making it difficult to explain who we are. Under the category of reforming our practice, the authors recommend greater emphasis on equipping believers for a lifetime of discipleship, reclaiming the authority of scripture for our life together, and paying more theological attention to our weekly practice of the Lord's Supper.

And now, for your consideration, our third and final installment.

The Urgency of Christian Unity

Every student of Disciples history must surely be struck by the fervor with which leaders of our movement have worked to unite Christians across the denominational lines that separate the Body of Christ. The unity of all those who confess Jesus as Lord and Savior is not simply one item on a list of church priorities; it is the heart of the gospel, to be pursued and proclaimed with passionate urgency. Barton Stone's "Christians" and Alexander Campbell's "Disciples" would never have united in 1832 if the leaders had demanded full agreement with one another. What they did share was a conviction that the unity of the church can only be experienced as a gift from God.

Our passion for Christian unity defines us. It is our gift to the larger Church. Because we have not yet realized this dream is no reason to abandon it. A commitment to work and witness for Christian unity on the local level can be transformative for congregations who consciously seek to embody it.

Knowing and Sharing Our Story

Losing a sense of purpose is common for any group that fails to educate new members about its history. Because so many Disciples think we have no defining story, we have trouble finding consensus around a shared ethos. We do have a story worth teaching and sharing, with roots on the American frontier, and a compelling witness to the power the Gospel:

We believe we are Christians only but not the only Christians.

We believe unity and diversity coexist.

We believe the biblical message is accessible to all who desire to study it.

We take statements of faith seriously without insisting they define the content of the Christian gospel for everyone.

We believe no one has the right to judge the worthiness of another who professes commitment to the Lordship of Jesus.

We come to the Communion table at the Lord's invitation, not the church's.

We believe that outward symbols can witness to inward transformation, chief among them baptism.

We believe the visible unity of the Church offers an irresistible witness to the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ.

Renee's Summary

All of that makes us a movement for *wholeness* in a fragmented world, which is the identity statement for the Christian Church across North America. When I discovered the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in my 30's, I found the church that I'd been searching for all my life. Whether you are a lifelong Disciple, or (like me) you got here as soon as you could, we have so much to be thankful for and to share with the world around us. Dr. Hartman and I would welcome your thoughts about reclaiming our identity and reforming our practices. My e-mail address is renee@firstchristianwf.com.



Members of the FCC Executive Council recently completed 10 hours of strategic planning led by Bryan Rose, a consultant with Auxano which is a nationwide church consulting group. Watch for news from our leaders coming soon!



SOLE
HOPE

It may not look like it, but FCC members Harry & Polly Tonemah are making shoes. Sole Hope recycles jeans and tires to make shoes for children in Africa. Wearing shoes protects the children from soil-borne diseases. Catherine Earley hosted the Sole Hope party recently at FCC. For more information on this ministry, visit [Sole Hope on Facebook](#).

**CHRISTIAN MEN'S FELLOWSHIP
SWEETHEART BANQUET**

WILL BE THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18TH

The Christian Men's Fellowship of First Christian Church would like to invite you to their annual Sweetheart Banquet being held on Thursday, February 18, at 6:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Highlights of the evening include Craig Reynolds on piano, music by Elise & Andrew Allen, door prizes, presentation of the "Person of the Year" award, and those delicious steaks. The cost is \$7 per person. Single and unescorted ladies, who are members of FCC, will be the guests of CMF, but please stop by the church office and pick up a ticket.

Please **MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS** in worship this Sunday or by calling the church office, 692-2282.

As in previous years, this is an adults' only dinner, and childcare will be available.

**JOURNEY THROUGH SCRIPTURE TO
CHANGE TOPICS**

On Sunday, February 14th, at 9:45 AM, in the Church Parlor, a change will be made in the course of study for February-May. Participants will look at "Jesus through the Gospels." The approach will be to look at the literary works that provide us with a view of Jesus through Early Christianity.



Soup orders may be picked up from the small Kitchen in the Gym this Sunday, February 14th, after both services and during Sunday School, or next week.

**CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP
GROUP MEETINGS**

CCF Group Meetings will be as follows on **Monday, February 15:** **Group 1** will meet at 1:30 pm at Patt Giddings' home, 2806 Mill Valley; **Group 2** will meet at 12:00 noon in Rm 405; **Group 3** will meet at 2:00 pm in Rm 402.

MEMBER NEWS

♥**Hospitalized:** at URHCS is Corliss Wyatt. Released and back home are Kathy Boren & Linda C. Carr.

♥Our sympathies are extended to Opal Noble & Family on learning of the death of her sister, Molly Klump, last week in Clinton OK.

♥We extend our sympathies to Robert Hernandez & Family on learning of the death of his aunt, Erlinda Hernandez Castro, on February 5th.

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 GUESTS

We are excited to report that the following persons visited for the first time this past Sunday: Jeannie Culp, Jessica Joss, Felisters Kenani, and Grace Obare.

FEBRUARY MINISTRY MEETINGS

Tuesday, February 16, 2016

6:00 pm, Fellowship & Scout Halls

Education, Evangelism, Membership, Stewardship & World Outreach

7:00 pm, Fellowship Hall

Worship

If you will need childcare, please RSVP to the church office, 692-2282, by noon on Monday, February 15.

YOUNG AGES PRESCHOOL OPEN HOUSE

Young Ages Preschool would like to cordially invite you to our "Down on the Farm" Open House on Tuesday evening, March 1st, from 6:00-7:00 p.m. in the Young Ages classrooms of our church.

Are you looking for a preschool for your child/grandchild? Would like to see what we do? Please come, look around and celebrate our student's accomplishments. We are very proud of our preschool and we love to show off!

Our spring fundraiser will be a bake sale during the Open House and a raffle which will begin on Thursday, March 18th, to benefit our school. The raffle items will be posted around the church, listed in next week's Challenger and put on the Young Ages Preschool Facebook page. You may purchase your raffle tickets from a YAS student, in the YAS office or in the church office.

2016-17 School Enrollment Begins on March 1st

Registration packets will be available at Open House. For more information, please call Karen Bivona in the Young Ages office, 692-3640.



TIME TO PRAY?

The Time to Pray team will start taking prayer requests on March 1st—so men and women—we need you to be part of the prayer team.

Those interested in being on the prayer team will meet for a brief meeting on Sunday, February 21st, after the 10:45 worship service in the Sanctuary. If you can't make it to church at that time, you can call Nancy Jolliff at 766-2437 to let her know of your interest in being part of the team.

With no meetings after February 21, the prayer team will get periodic updates. New names will be added as soon as contacted.

CHILDREN COME FIRST HAS CHOCOLATE!

Children Come First is selling World's Finest Chocolate. Items are \$2 each and include: chocolate covered almonds, milk chocolate almond bars, crisp bars, mint melt aways, and carmel whirls. If you would like to buy some chocolate, please stop by the CCF Office today!

* **OPEN FLOWER DATES** *
* If you would like to donate the flowers for the *
* worship service in the Sanctuary, the following dates *
* are open: **February 21 & 28.** To donate or for more *
* info, call Peggy Fitts, Flower Coordinator, 781-2426. *

This Sunday:
8:40 & 10:45 Services:
 "Has Satan Made an Offer You Can't Refuse?"
 Luke 4:1-13
 Dr. David B. Hartman Jr.

5:14 CGRM Worship Service:
 Rev. Erin Taylor

**SERVING SUNDAY
 ELDERS**

Gary Ballard, Doug Thompson; Kenn Hill, Presiding
DIACONATE COMMUNION VISITATION
 Billy Thacker, Jody Brannon, Shirley Craft
DIACONATE COMMUNION PREPARATION
 Catherine Earley & Caitlin Hartman

FEBRUARY DIACONATE SERVERS

Jody & Brandi Brannon, Kay Jackson, June Lemmon, James Poole, Billy Thacker, Catherine Earley, Caitlin Hartman, Kathleen Lauck, Michael Pettibon, Sandra Whatley, Lee DeVilbiss, Jill Griffin, Jon Hartman, Debbie & Mark Turnbow, Luke Ward.

OPPORTUNITIES

Sunday, February 14, 2016

- 8:40 Worship (Chapel)
- 9:30 Sunday School
- 9:30 Soup Pickup (Small Kitchen in the Gym)
- 9:45 Journey Through Scripture (Parlor)
- 10:45 Worship (Sanctuary)
- 12:00 Soup Pickup (Small Kitchen in the Gym)
- 3:45 Chancel Ringers (Stratten Hall)
- 4:00 Pastor's Class (Rm 310)
- 5:00 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)
- 6:00 Young Disciples Valentine's Dinner (Grades K-5) (Rm 309 & 311)
- 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, February 15, 2016

- 7:30-6:00 Children Come First (M-F)
- 9:00-12:00 Young Ages School (MT-F)
- 12:00 CWF Group 2 (Rm 405)
- 1:30 CWF Group 1 (2806 Mill Valley)
- 2:00 CWF Group 2 (Rm 402)
- 7:30 Boy Scouts Troop 15 (Fellowship Hall)

Tuesday, February 16, 2016

- 2:00 Library Committee (Library)
- 5:00 Prayer Team for Persecuted Church (Rm 310)
- 6:00 Ministries Meetings (Fellowship & Scout Halls)
 (Education, Evangelism, Membership, Stewardship, World Outreach)
- 7:00 Worship Ministry Meeting (Fellowship Hall)

Wednesday, February 17, 2016

- 7:00 Elders' Breakfast (Rm 402/Chapel)
- 5:00 Mid-Week Communion Service (Chapel)
- 5:30 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)
- 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, February 18, 2016

- 9:00 CWF Group 3 Birthday Breakfast (IHOP-SW Pkwy)
- 1:30 Knit Wits (Parlor)
- 6:00-10:00 Boys Basketball League Games (Gym)
- 6:30 CMF Sweetheart Banquet (Fellowship Hall)

Friday, February 19, 2016

- 3:30 Leave for CYF Mid-Winter Rally (Feb. 19-21) (Athens TX)

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	

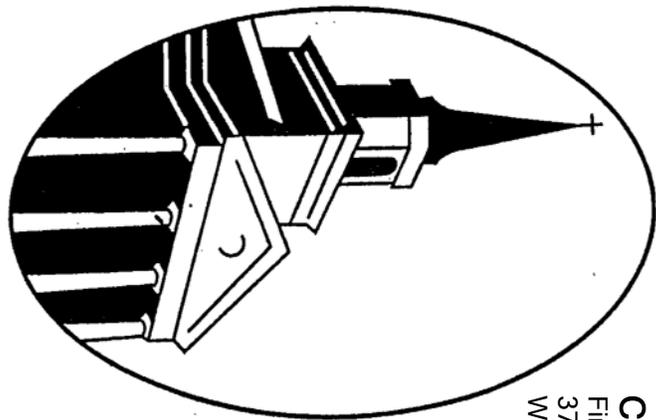
Home Phone Number:

FOR THE RECORD . . .

Sunday School	108
8:40 Worship . . . 44	10:45 Worship . . . 212
Total Worship 256	
CGRM: Friday Faith Refuge . . . 5	Sunday Evening Ministry . . . 18
Sunday Receipts Needed Per Week	\$16,698.52
Sunday Receipts for 2/7/16	\$31,648.00
Through Feb. 8: Income \$89,781.77	Expenses \$83,334.63

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

Pray for the perseverance and faith of Muslims in Guinea who turn to Christ.



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.