

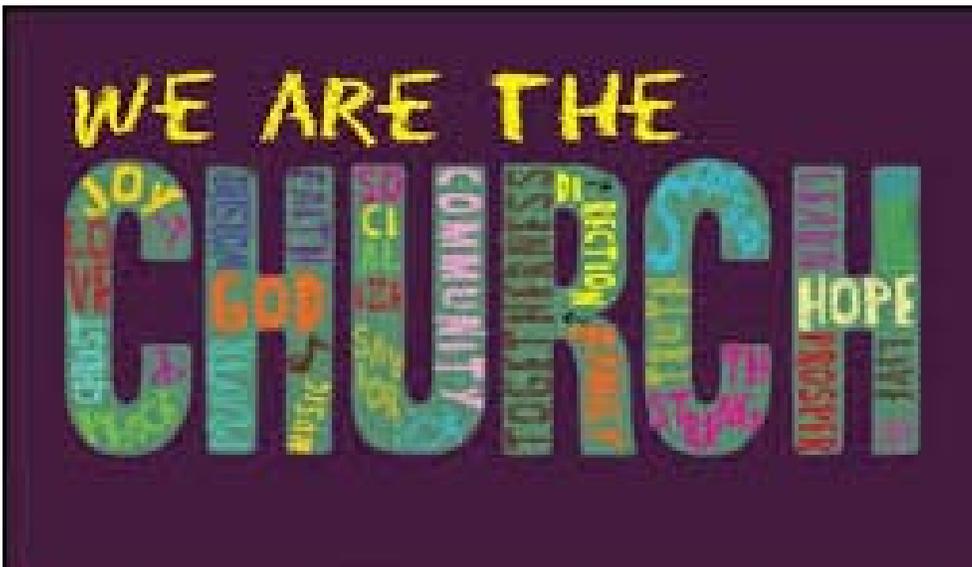


Christian Challenger

Vol. 63

February 3, 2016

NO. 5



LAITY SUNDAY SPEAKER: SHIRLEY CRAFT



JOIN US FOR LAITY SUNDAY FEBRUARY 7

"We affirm the priesthood of all believers, rejoicing in the gifts of the Holy Spirit- which include the gift of leadership - that God has given for the common good"
--Principles of Identity, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Lait Sunday is a special celebration of the faithful, multi-talented members of First Christian Church. Each week we live out the understanding that every believer emerges from the waters of baptism as a minister and disciple of Jesus Christ. We do this as elders preside at the Lord's Table and as deacons, liturgists, musicians and others provide leadership in our weekly worship services. It is seen as greeters provide frontline hospitality and lay leaders provide authoritative interpretation of scripture as they teach in church school classes. This understanding of the role of the laity does not end in worship but

extends throughout the life of the church. Clergy and laity are partners in leadership and in ministry.

As a people who claim scripture as a primary source of authority, this should not surprise us. The Greek term *laos* from which laity is derived refers to all of God's people not a specific or elite group. It reflects the reality that down through history much of the work of the church has been done by the laity. As members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) we seek to embrace and empower all believers as they make their unique contributions to the continuing work of Christ in the world today.

Shirley Craft is president of Craft Consulting LLC, a firm which specializes in project management, organization development, special events and fundraising. As a servant leader, Shirley has been active in a number of nonprofits organizations, including the Boys & Girls Clubs, for which she not only served on the local board of directors but also for the statewide Texas Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs for five years. This year Shirley is serving alongside David Hartman on the Editorial Board for the Wichita Falls Times Record News. At First Christian Church, Shirley is a deacon, member of the Executive Council, and chairperson of Evangelism. Shirley is married to Kenn Hill, who have been members of FCC since 2005. Kenn serves as an Elder.

Across Dave's Desk... WHEN GOD USES SCIENCE, PART II



Richard Dawkins

Some scientists and some believers consider themselves locked in mortal combat. Richard Dawkins, the evolutionary biologist and militant atheist, wrote in his book, *The God Delusion*, "I am against religion because it teaches us to be satisfied with not understanding the world." That's preposterous. The very purpose of theological study is best defined by the motto of St. Anselm of Canterbury: *fides quaerens intellectum*, "faith seeking understanding." As scripture says,

Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding, for the gain from her is better than gain from silver and her profit better than gold. She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her...[Proverbs 3.13-18]

Whatever his merits as a biologist, Dawkins' actual knowledge about Christianity is nominal, which makes his pronouncements on religion tendentious at best and ludicrous at worst (at least to anyone who actually knows better).



Jerry Falwell

By the same token, those whose field of endeavor is religion need to be cautious about judging scientific findings if they don't understand the research behind them. The late Jerry Falwell, God rest his soul, once said, in response to a statement of concern from Christian environmentalists, "I believe that global warming is a myth. It is God's planet -- and he's taking care of it. And I don't believe that anything we do will raise or lower the temperature one point." Leaving aside the *science* of climate change (I wouldn't touch the politics of it with a ten-foot pole), the Bible itself asserts that human beings can change God's Creation for the worse. In the expulsion from the Garden, the Lord says to Adam and Eve, "Cursed is the ground because of you" [Genesis 3.17]. The reason the Chronicler gives for the destruction of Jerusalem and the resultant Babylonian captivity of its

people is their failure to be faithful stewards of Creation, which included heeding God's commandment in Leviticus 25.1-7 to let the land lie fallow every seven years:

They [the Babylonians] burned the house of God, broke down the wall of Jerusalem, burned all its palaces with fire, and destroyed all its precious vessels. He [King Nebuchadnezzar] took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had made up for its sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept sabbath, to fulfill seventy years [II Chronicles 36.19-21].

Throughout history, people have tried to explain the reason behind a particular phenomenon. The term for this is "etiology," which comes from a Greek word meaning "to give the reason for." In medicine, this means trying to determine the cause of a disease or a condition: Why is this person suffering from diabetes, or heart disease? In law enforcement, it means investigating to determine how an accident or a criminal act occurred—Why is this car in the ditch, or why is this bank missing two million dollars? In the Book of Genesis, especially in the 2nd and 3rd chapters, there are many etiologies: Why do women give birth in pain? Why is growing a food crop so hard? Why do human beings have a natural revulsion to snakes? The answer in Genesis, of course, is that the original humans, Adam and Eve, disobeyed God after being tempted by a serpent, and were cast out of the Garden of Eden. Many Christians believe this is the literal truth of what happened. But can some things be true without being *literally* true?

Consider this, dear reader: Do you love another person with all of your heart? Good for you. I have absolutely no reason to doubt your veracity. But is that *literally* true? No. Saying you love someone with all of your heart is not a literal truth, because the source of the feeling we call "love" is not the heart, but a part of the brain called the limbic system, specifically the thalamus, the amygdala, and the hippocampus. But we don't say to someone we love, "I feel strong emotion for you in my thalamus, my amygdala and my hippocampus," unless we're Mr. Spock, or Sheldon Cooper. To say we love someone with all of our hearts is to tell a *metaphorical* truth, not a literal one. Many Christians—perhaps most—understand the first 11 chapters of Genesis as primarily metaphorical truth. Scientific discoveries periodically buttress those metaphorical truths. Consider, for example, the enormous issue of what happened "In the beginning".... *To be continued*

DAVE

Prayer: Almighty and loving God, Creator of all that is good, may what we discover and what we discern draw us ever closer to you, in Jesus' Name, Amen.

CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

The February CWF Luncheon will be Monday, February 8th, at 11:45 am in the Fellowship Hall. The program will be Chantel Grant with First Step. The devotional will be given by Alice Gordan and the service offering will go to First Step. Reservations are not required and guests are welcome. Cost is \$5.00 per person. The CWF Board will meet at 10:30 am in Room 310 prior to the luncheon.

PREPARE YOUR HEARTS FOR EASTER

Book signing with Sheri Sutton

Sunday, February 7th, Church Library

9:30-10:30 am during the Sunday School hour

In her third book, *In Remembrance of Me*, Sheri A. Sutton offers a collection of meditations that will give readers a time to pause from their hectic lives and focus on the season of Lent. She writes, "Lent is a season in which we can grow closer to God. To know God, we must first know Jesus, the Son of God and the Son of Man. When we open our minds and hearts to the presence of God, the spirit of the Son is made know within us. When we allow him to transform us, we become testaments to God's resurrecting power as revealed in our daily lives. And when we proclaim our faith in the risen Christ, we become followers of someone remarkable—a Savior for all mankind."

JOURNEY THROUGH SCRIPTURE

"Great Figures of the New Testament" will be the new study for Journey Through Scripture beginning this Sunday, February 7th, in the Church Parlor, at 9:45 AM. The study will look at major personalities of the New Testament, as well as, other individuals of the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and the letters of the New Testament. The leader, Larry Spradley, will seek to help participants take a new look at these figures of the Early Church and the message they provide for the reader. Each week a different figure will be presented.

PRIME TIMERS LUNCHEON

Sunday, February 7,

12:00 noon, Fellowship Hall

PANTRY SUNDAY - FEBRUARY 7

Pantry Sunday for Interfaith Ministries will be this Sunday, February 7th. Items for collection will be **shampoo, toothpaste and deodorant**. Also needed are the **reusable cloth shopping bags**. IMI and Outreach appreciate your gifts to this project each month.

FIRST TIME VISITORS

We are excited to report that the following persons visited for the first time this past Sunday: Shelley Bard; Bruce, Esther, Luke & Caleb Briesemeister; and Larry & Janey McCown.

MEMBER NEWS

♥**Hospitalized:** at URHCS is Kathy Boren & Corliss Wyatt. Released and back home are Helen Jackson, Tom Long, Dr. Donald Terry, Emily Strickland Villegas, Jim Zug.

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!

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!



Welcome, Brent & Roxanne!

It was a pleasure to welcome Brent & Roxanne Roberts into our fellowship by private statement of transfer on Wednesday, January 27th. The Roberts' contact information is 4658 Bunny Run, 76310, 817-716-3001.

Alert your friends and neighbors! Friends of the Groom is coming!

What is Friends of the Groom, you may ask. It is a theater company from outside Cincinnati, Ohio, committed to revealing the Christian message with a unique blend of humor, story, challenging content, and scenes that are hard to forget. The traveling troupe of 3 actors has been using theater performances, educational workshops, and spiritual retreats to reveal the love of Christ since 1980 at thousands of locations from Anchorage to Athens, Boston to Beijing, and Jacksonville to Jerusalem. They will be with us on March 19 for an evening of dinner theater, and they will also be sharing in both worship services on March 20. Tickets for the dinner theater will be \$20, and reservations must be made in advance. Both occasions would be a great time to invite your friends to come and share in this fun, moving, and inspirational event! You can see more about Friends of the Groom at: friendsofthegroom.org and on youtube.



TIME TO PRAY?

If you are interested in praying for our church, members, and others, keep reading. I would like to start a prayer group where members can pray at home, when they want. Some need prayers daily or quickly. We can help meet that need. Keeping people's needs confidential and praying daily are stressed.

If you have questions, call Nancy Jolliff at 766-2437. We will have a brief meeting in the sanctuary immediately following 10:45 worship on February 21.

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!



ORDER & PICK UP DATES HAVE BEEN EXTENDED!

Quarts of frozen, homemade soups are NOW available for order through this Sunday, February 7th, and will be available for pick-up or delivery (upon request) on Valentine's Day, February 14th 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! Orders can be placed with the Church Office or with Justin Dickey no later than February 7th! 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!



This Sunday:

8:40 & 10:45 Services:
LAITY SUNDAY
 Luke 6:27-29, Matthew 5:23-24
 Shirley Craft

5:14 CGRM Worship Service:
 Rev. Erin Taylor

**SERVING SUNDAY
 ELDERS**

Eddie Tucker, Polly Tonemah; Gary Cook, Presiding
DIACONATE COMMUNION VISITATION
 James Poole, Kay Jackson, Catherine Earley

DIACONATE COMMUNION PREPARATION
 Jody & Brandi Brannon

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 7, 2016

LAITY SUNDAY / BOY SCOUT SUNDAY / PANTRY SUNDAY

- 8:40 Worship (Chapel)
- 9:30 Sunday School
- 9:30 Sheri Sutton Book Signing (Library)
- 9:45 Journey Through Scripture (Parlor)
- 10:45 Worship (Sanctuary)
- 12:00 Prime Timers Luncheon (Fellowship Hall)
- 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)
- 5:45 Young Disciples (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 8, 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)
- 10:30 CWF Board Meeting (Rm 310)
- 11:45 CWF Luncheon (Fellowship Hall)
- 7:30 Boy Scouts Troop 15 (Fellowship Hall)

Tuesday, February 9, 2016

- 2:00 Library Committee (Library)
- 7:00 Property Ministry Meeting (Rm 402)

Wednesday, February 10, 2016

ASH WEDNESDAY

- 7:00 Elders' Breakfast (Rm 402/Chapel)
- 5:30 Ash Wednesday Service (Chapel)
- 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)

- 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 11, 2016

- 10:00 YAS Valentine Parties (Thurs & Fri)
- 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

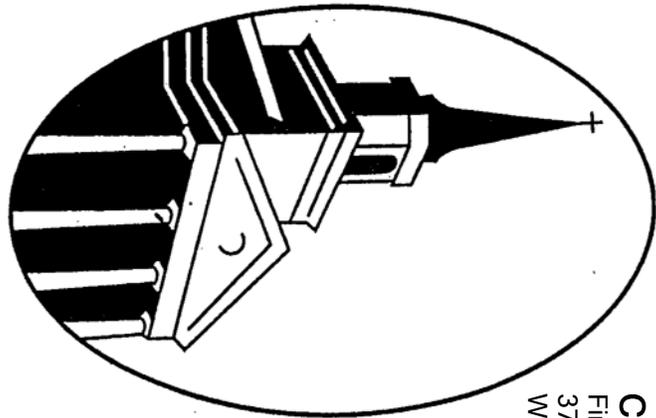
Home Phone Number:

FOR THE RECORD . . .

Sunday School 107
 8:40 Worship . . . 55 10:45 Worship . . . 215
 Total Worship 270
 CGRM: Sunday Evening Ministry . . 28
 Sunday Receipts Needed Per Week \$16,698.52
 Sunday Receipts for 1/31/16 \$9,460.00
 Through Feb. 1: Income \$57,983.77 Expenses \$61,766.83

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

Pray that Turkey, the land of Paul's missionary efforts, would once again have thriving churches.



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