



# Christian Challenger

Vol. 64

September 6, 2017

No. 18



## DAVID HARTMAN DAY Sunday, September 10

This Sunday, September 10, we will be celebrating our beloved David Hartman for his almost seventeen years as the faithful and loving senior minister to our congregation, as well as his being a friend and spiritual leader to this entire community.

Please, gather with friends and family as we celebrate this exceptional man's journey with us over these past years.

Dr. Hartman will deliver his final sermons as our senior minister this coming Sunday at the 8:40 Chapel service and again at the 10:45 service in the Sanctuary. You will not want to miss the opportunity to be present at one of these services.

At 4:00 pm in the Sanctuary of the church we will come together for a celebratory service for David filled with song, prayer and memories. Following the service, all are invited to proceed to the Fellowship Hall to join David, his family and a host of friends for a festive reception.

Please, make your plans to join us for worship and celebration.

## Welcome, Claire!



Claire Baer will join the FCC ministry staff on September 11 as the new Director of Children's Ministry. Claire is a Wichita Falls native with a B.A. in Religious Education from

Oklahoma City University. For three summers Claire served as a summer intern in children's ministry at First United Methodist Church of Wichita Falls. She also served an internship in children's ministry at St. Luke's United Methodist Church in Oklahoma City. For the past year she has taught and served in an administrative capacity at the School for Little People based at FUMC Wichita Falls.

## Basket Assist



The Outreach crew loaded 75 baskets on a Texoma Freight truck for delivery to MSU International Students. Pictured are Ted Lauck, Scott Hunter, Ann Hunter, Judy Muir, Dr. Dave Hartman, Diana Costello, David Tucker, Linda & Carlton Carr, and Kathleen Lauck. For more information on the delivery see page 3.

## HHH Breakfast



It is early to rise for Discovery Class members who prepare breakfast for HHH riders. Gary and Kim Ballard, Stacey Strickland and Robert Hernandez are in the kitchen at 3 a.m. the morning of the race to be sure everything is ready.

# Across Dave's Desk...

by Senior Minister Dr. David B. Hartman, Jr.

## The Benedict Option? Part 9



When I began this series, I intended to review Rod Dreher's *The Benedict Option*, a thoughtful, unsettling book in which he says Christians must accept that we have lost the culture wars and are now on the brink of a new Dark Age. This contemporary version would be different from the original, when the store of knowledge eroded from generation to generation. This next one will be akin to the foreboding vision Winston Churchill foretold after the fall of France:

...the Battle of Britain is about to begin. Upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilization... *if we fail, then the whole world, including the United States, including all that we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new dark age made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the lights of perverted science.* [Emphasis added]

The formulation of the Nicene Creed in 325 more or less settled an intense theological dispute among Christians over the very nature of Christ: Was he only human (the minimalists), only divine (the Docetics), half and half, like Hercules (the neopagans) or fully human and fully divine? This last, a conviction founded on the New Testament (officially canonized at the same Council where the Creed was formulated) was held by those believers, like Bishop Athanasius, who called themselves orthodox (which means "right thought"). At the Council, held in Nicaea, the orthodox position was decreed as the true belief of the Church at large:

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven.

This is the heart of the Nicene Creed. Catholic, Orthodox and Reform Christians, either regularly or periodically, recite it (why we Disciples don't is an article for my successor to write). But though the Nicene Creed is almost universally confessed among Christians, it does not insure Christlike behavior. Orthodoxy ("right thought") does not inevitably lead to *orthopraxis* ("right conduct"). Christians who professed the Nicene Creed still slaughtered each other in the Hundred Years War, the American Civil War, and World War I. As Lincoln mournfully noted, "Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other."

For a brief period, Church and State were joined in the governance of the world's largest Empire. In AD 380, during the

reign of Theodosius, Christianity—which had grown and strengthened despite centuries of official persecution and contempt—became the official religion of the Roman Empire. And then, in short order, the Empire fell apart.

The Benedictine Order arose in the chaos that beset Europe after the fall of Rome. Petrarch dubbed the era "the Dark Ages," which lasted from approximately AD 400-800. While the Byzantine Empire—in actuality, the Roman Empire in the East—continued to endure from its base in Constantinople (now the Turkish capital of Istanbul), the Empire in the West collapsed. Hordes of invaders—Vandals, Visigoths, Huns, Mongols, Vikings—traversed the European landscape, pillaging, killing and enslaving. Until Charlemagne established the Holy Roman Empire in the early 9th Century, most of the continent consisted of tiny realms incapable of defending or feeding their own people. Refugees surged back and forth across dissolving borders. King Arthur, if he existed, was probably a Romanized Christian chieftain who fought the invading pagan Saxons and won a battle near Mt. Badon in the early 6th Century. Throughout Europe, the lights of the Christian faith—not to mention the ancient lamps of learning and civilization—were being extinguished in chaos and carnage. It was within this setting that Benedict of Nursia envisioned a means by which the faith, and its attendant virtues, could survive until civilization rose again from the ashes. He did so by establishing small enclaves—monasteries—where Christians lived, worked and worshiped together. These monasteries, by being industrious repositories of learning while practicing hospitality and charity, usually proved to be blessings for the benighted communities around them. The legacy of ancient civilizations was preserved by the scholarly toil of monks.

Dreher says Christians should establish their own separate enclaves. In those communities, they could worship and fellowship together and, by God's grace, prove to be blessings to those outside them. He cited a number of contemporary examples that admittedly seem appealing. But I do not share Dreher's belief that America is irredeemable. David Brooks of the New York Times articulated it this way:

The right response to the moment is not the Benedict Option, it is Orthodox Pluralism. It is to surrender to some orthodoxy that will overthrow the superficial obsessions of the self and put one's life in contact with a transcendent ideal. But it is also to reject the notion that that ideal can be easily translated into a pure, homogenized path. It is, on the contrary, to throw oneself more deeply into friendship with complexity, with different believers and atheists, liberals and conservatives, the dissimilar and unlike.

As Christians, we can bear witness to our faith while disavowing any aspirations to theocracy, a form of governance which has, throughout history, proven abysmal to those compelled to live under it. As Jesus taught, there is a difference between Caesar and God. But practicing the Christian virtues of honesty, fidelity, charity and hospitality can be an expression of the highest patriotism. As John Adams wrote, "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."

The challenges of our times, and our country, abound. The world is perilous and our country is conflicted. That makes this a great time to be a Christian.

I say this without irony.

*Dave*

*Prayer: Almighty God, we do not ask for easy times, but strength for the times in which we live. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

# FCC MINISTRY NEWS AND CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

The **Challenger** is biweekly, so NO Challenger next week!  
FCC Ministry News is sent by email every Monday.

Welcome, New Members!

**Successful Delivery!** It was hot. The baskets got heavier with each one that was lifted into and out of the truck, and the delivery process took longer than expected. But on August 22, FCC delivered 75 baskets to bless new international students at MSU. Although we intended to target non-Caribbean students, it turned out that population was down this year, so we joined Heritage Church on Southwest Parkway to distribute the rest to the Caribbeans. The total number of students served by the two churches was 138. Students were most appreciative, the folks at Heritage were glad to have our help, and we were blessed to be able to serve our neighbors at MSU. Many thanks to all who provided baskets and assisted with the delivery.

**Music News!** Chancel Ringers resume rehearsals on September 17 at 3:45pm in the Choir Room, and we need a few new members to fill out our choir! Chancel Ringers ring in church about once a month, and present specials concerts at Christmas and in the spring. A few of our members even rang at the Texas Rangers game in July. If you can read music and count, this might be the small group you've been looking for! If you have questions, please call Jeanette at 781-5199.

Grow in Grace Choir for grades K-5 resume rehearsals on September 17 at 5pm in the Choir Room. We sing in church a few times a year, present a spring musical, play instruments, enjoy games, and learn about God through music. Please join us on September 17 for our fall reboot! If you have any questions, call Jeanette at 781-5199.

**Christian Women's Fellowship:** The September CWF Luncheon will be Monday, Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>, at 11:45 am in the Fellowship Hall. The program will be Dr. Francine Carraro with the Wichita Falls Museum of Art at MSU. The devotional will be given by Cathy Biggs and the service offering will go to WFMA. 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.

**Group Meetings** will be as follows: **Group 1** will meet on Monday, Sept. 18<sup>th</sup>, at 1:30 pm at Cathy Biggs' home, 3718 Cedar Elm. **Group 2** will meet on Wednesday, Sept. 20<sup>th</sup>, at 12:00 noon in Room 405. **Group 3** will meet on Monday, Sept. 18<sup>th</sup>, at 2:00 pm in Room 405.

## Member News:

♥**Hospitalized:** at Health South Rehab is Jean Puckett & Gayle Salazar. Released and back home are LaVeta Kaiser & Jimmy Smriglio.

♥**Military Deployed:** is Jodi Schmidt, daughter of Debbi & Dennis Schmidt. Please keep them all in your prayers.

♥Our sympathies are extended to Rita Cason, Linda Carr, and Ronnie Cason & Families on learning of the death of their husband & father, Ewell Cason, on August 25<sup>th</sup>. Services were held in the Sanctuary on September 2<sup>nd</sup>.

♥Our condolences are extended to Sherrie Vaccarella & Family on learning of the death of her step-father, Larry C. Sharp on August 21<sup>st</sup>.

♥We extend our sympathies to the family of former FCC member, Judd Holt. Judd passed away on August 22<sup>nd</sup> in Denton TX.

♥We extend our condolences to Norman Howland and Cindy Hernandez & Families on learning of the death of their son & brother, Jeff Howland, on September 1<sup>st</sup>.

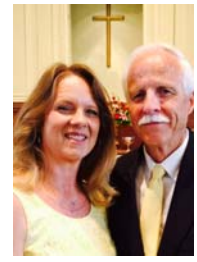
♥Congratulations to Mindy & Roy Dorman on the birth of their son, Jaxton Ray Dorman, on August 24<sup>th</sup>. He weighed 9 lbs 7 oz and was 21.5" long. Proud grandmother is Glenda Dorman.



Morely Luciano



Rose Silvertooth



Teresa & Larry Archambo

It was a joy to welcome Taylor Lile into our fellowship this past Sunday by Confession of Faith and Baptism. Taylor, who works for the Dallas Cowboys, is the daughter of Floyd & Debra Lile. Welcome, Taylor!

It was a pleasure to welcome Morely Luciano into our fellowship this past Sunday by Confession of Faith during the 8:40 service. Morely is a MSU student studying political science/sociology from Riverdale, NY. She will be baptized this Sunday. Morely's contact info is: 3704 Louis J. Rodriguez Dr. #934D, 76308, 646-752-7613. Welcome, Morely!

It was a delight to welcome Rose Silvertooth into our fellowship this past Sunday by Transfer of Membership from First United Methodist Church of Henrietta TX. She began attending at the invitation of Lynette Gill. Rose's contact info is: 6 Avery Row Ct, 76309, 538-6604. Welcome, Rose!

It was a thrill to welcome Larry & Teresa Archambo into our fellowship this past Sunday by Transfer of Membership from First United Methodist Church of Plainview TX. Larry works for the Iowa Park CISD. Their contact info is: 1817 Speedway, 76301, Larry's cell: 642-6075, Teresa's cell: 642-6076. Welcome, Larry & Teresa!

## Fall Bible Study: *The Jesus I Never Knew*

Based on Philip Yancey's book on the life of Christ, *The Jesus I Never Knew*, this six-session small group Bible study uses film portraits of Jesus and contrasts them with the Jesus of the Bible. This study gives a fresh, uncluttered perspective on Jesus—his radical claims, his challenging teachings, and his effect on others. *The Jesus I Never Knew* study uncovers a Jesus who is brilliant, creative, challenging, fearless, compassionate, unpredictable, and ultimately satisfying. As Yancey writes, "No one who meets Jesus ever stays the same."

Join Sheri Sutton as she leads this study beginning Wednesday, September 20, in Room 310 at 10:30 a.m. Call the church office at 692-2282 to register. Study guides are \$8 and available now in the church office.

## The Methods and Themes of Jesus' Teaching

Journey Through Scripture, led by Larry Spradley, begins September 10<sup>th</sup>, 9:45 am, in the Church Parlor. This will be the New Journey for JTS. It will be a twofold study of both methods and messages Jesus used to address the people. Journey Through Scripture is an "unorganized body of adults seeking to grow in the Christian Faith that began February, 1998. While the style of each journey has been lecture, questions and observations are freely encouraged. Join us as we travel!

## This Sunday:

8:40 & 10:45 Services:

"With Us Always, to the End of the Age"

Matthew 28:16-20

Dr. David B. Hartman, Jr.

## SERVING SUNDAY ELDERS

9/10: Polly Tonemah, Cathy Gately; Susan Buckley, Presiding  
9/17: Cal Edgemon, Robert Hernandez; Ronnie James, Presiding

### DIACONATE COMMUNION VISITATION

9/10: Caitlin Hartman, Lee Bybee, Sharon Roach  
9/17: Ainslee Buckley, Debbie Turnbow, Mark Turnbow

### DIACONATE COMMUNION PREPARATION

9/10: Catherine Earley & Lee Bybee  
9/17: Caitlin Hartman & Sharon Roach

## SEPTEMBER DIACONATE SERVERS

Jerry & Cheryl Caraway, Larry & Linda Carr, Catherine Earley, Caitlin Hartman, Lee Bybee, Sharon Roach, Debbie & Mark Turnbow, Sarah Cook, Eric Hartman, Sherry Martin, Sally Wilson, David Wyatt & Luke Machado.

## OPPORTUNITIES

Sunday, September 10, 2017 DR. HARTMAN'S LAST DAY

8:40 Worship (Chapel)  
9:30 Sunday School  
9:45 Journey Through Scripture (Parlor)  
10:45 Worship (Sanctuary)  
4:00 Celebration Worship (Sanctuary) & Reception (Fellowship Hall)

Monday, September 11, 2017

7:30-6:00 Children Come First (M-F)  
9:00-12:00 Young Ages School (M-F)  
10:30 CWF Board Meeting (Rm 310)  
11:45 CWF Luncheon (Fellowship Hall)  
5:30 Sr. Minister Search Committee (Rm 405)  
6:00 Education Ministry Meeting (Rm 310)  
7:30 Boy Scouts Troop 15 (Fellowship Hall)

Tuesday, September 12, 2017

2:00 Library Committee (Library)  
6:00 Property Ministry Meeting (Rm 310)  
6:00 Common Ground Recovery Ministries Support Groups:  
Rebuilding from Broken Relationships (Rm 222)  
Substance Abuse (Rm 304) Parenting (Rm 305 & 306)  
Grief (Rm 307) Women's C.A.R.E. (Rm 308)  
Anger Management (Rm 309)

7:00 Outreach Ministry Meeting (Library)

Wednesday, September 13, 2017

7:00 Elders' Breakfast (Rm 405/Chapel)  
5:30 The Neighborhood Meal (Fellowship Hall)  
6:00-7:00 The Neighborhood Worship (Fellowship Hall)  
7:00 Chancel Choir (High School-Adults) (Stratten Hall)

Sunday, September 17, 2017

8:40 Worship (Chapel)  
9:30 Sunday School  
9:45 Journey Through Scripture (Parlor)  
10:45 Worship (Fellowship Hall)  
3:45 Chancel Ringers (Stratten Hall)  
5:00 Grow in Grace Choir (Stratten Hall)

Monday, September 18, 2017

7:30-6:00 Children Come First (M-F)  
9:00-12:00 Young Ages School (M-F)  
1:30 CWF Group 1 (TBA)  
2:00 CWF Group 3 (Rm 405)  
7:30 Boy Scouts Troop 15 (Fellowship Hall)

Tuesday, September 19, 2017

2:00 Library Committee (Library)  
5:00 Prayer Team for Persecuted Church (Rm 310)  
5:30 Membership Ministry Meeting (Fellowship Hall)  
6:00 Stewardship Ministry Meeting (Rm 310)  
6:00 Common Ground Recovery Ministries Support Groups:  
Rebuilding from Broken Relationships (Rm 222)  
Substance Abuse (Rm 304) Parenting (Rm 305 & 306)  
Grief (Rm 307) Women's C.A.R.E. (Rm 308)  
Anger Management (Rm 309)

7:00 Worship Ministry Meeting (Fellowship Hall)

Wednesday, September 20, 2017

7:00 Elders' Breakfast (Rm 405/Chapel)  
10:30 Fall Bible Study (Rm 310)  
12:00 CWF Group 2 (Rm 405)  
5:30 The Neighborhood Meal (Fellowship Hall)  
6:00-7:00 The Neighborhood Worship (Fellowship Hall)  
7:00 Chancel Choir (High School-Adults) (Stratten Hall)

Thursday, September 21, 2017

9:00 CWF Group 3 Birthday Breakfast (IHOP on SW Pkwy)  
1:30 Knit Wits (Parlor)  
6:00 CMF Dinner (Fellowship Hall)

## THE CHURCH STAFF . . .

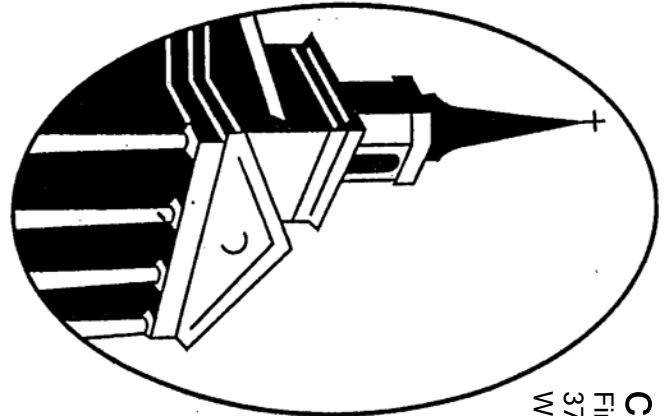
Church Number	940-692-2282	FAX Number	940-696-3085
Web Page:	www.firstchristianwf.com	Church e-mail:	susan@firstchristianwf.com
Dr. David Hartman, Senior Minister	692-2282		
Rev. Renee Hoke, Associate Minister	692-2282		
Cheryl Appling, Business Administrator	691-7265		
Jeanette Showalter, Director of Music Ministries	763-8515		
Heather Dickerson, Director of Children Come First	687-2231		
Alisa Gardner, Director of Young Ages School	692-3640		
Laurel Clement, Common Ground Recovery Ministries	642-7021		
Susan Marrs, Executive Secretary		Tina Williams, Financial Secretary	
Ann Hunter, Receptionist		Debbie Watson, Organist	

## FOR THE RECORD . . .

CGRM: (Tues., Aug. 29) . . . . .	21
The Neighborhood (Wed., Aug. 30) . . . . .	30
8:40 Worship . . . 42	10:45 Worship . . . 193
Total Worship . . . . .	265
Sunday School . . . . .	107
Sunday Receipts Needed Per Week	\$15,815.66
Sunday Receipts for 9/3/17	\$10,035.15
Through Sept. 5: Income \$497,124.44	Expenses \$534,685.69

## PERSECUTED CHURCH PRAYERS THIS WEEK ARE FOR:

Pray for the strength of Christians in Uzbekistan who are tortured for refusing to renounce their faith.



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