



# Christian Challenger

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No. 23



## GOOD SAMARITAN MINISTRY

Again this year the members of First Christian Church celebrate our blessings by blessing others. 557 new coats are being delivered this week to 11 elementary schools in WFISD. Coats for Kids which began in 1999 is nearing a milestone of 10,000 coats provided to boys and girls. This is a church-wide, year-long ministry at FCC as our designated shoppers seek the best prices on coats and our members support the Coats for Kids fund.

Our annual delivery of Thanksgiving baskets has grown this year and added First Christian Church reusable shopping bags for the grocery items. FCC volunteers will meet in Fellowship Hall Saturday morning at 9:45 am to collect food and delivery lists.

We're especially grateful to Judy Muir, Diana Costello and Debbi Schmidt for their Coats for Kids leadership and to Polly and Harry Tonemah for shepherding the Thanksgiving Basket project again this year. And thanks to everyone who contributed funding, food, and freezer space.

*Photos on this page: Renee Hoke leads the congregation in a prayer of blessing Sunday for the children who will receive coats this year; Josh deSteiguer got a workout this week hauling frozen turkeys from several area Walmarts to the church deep freeze; Coats for Kids volunteers included Judy Muir, Diana Costello, Norma Hill, Debbi Schmidt, Ted Lauck, Sherry Tucker, Lynette Gill, Roma Prassel, Sharon Roach.*

**Tickets on sale now for "Christmas Joy" CWF Brunch on December 11!**



## LOVING OUR NEIGHBORS IN 2018

“There is a movement creeping its way across church of all shapes, sizes and denominations. It’s gaining ground, it’s getting attention, and it’s making a difference. It’s slowly changing church statistics. These churches are changing the relationship between the church and their communities. They are getting a skeptical society to hear them.

“This is what defines them:

- They are inwardly strong but outwardly focused.
- They integrate good deeds and good news into the life of the church.
- They value impact and influence in the community more than attendance.
- They seek to be salt, light and leaven in the community.
- They see themselves as the “soul” of the community.
- They would be greatly missed by the community if they left.”

These words are part of the introduction to *The Externally Focused Church*. I love this book! It’s been one of my go-to ministry books for years. When I pulled it off the shelf in anticipation of our stewardship campaign based on the story of the Good Samaritan, it seemed to describe in detail the next chapter in the ministry of our congregation.

The book by pastors Rick Rusaw and Eric Swanson was written for churches like ours who have already demonstrated a servant’s heart. Just look at what we’re doing this week: on Sunday we prayed for 557 elementary children in our community who will receive new coats this week thanks to our Coats for Kids ministry, now in its 18<sup>th</sup> year; on Saturday we fan out across town to deliver 100 Thanksgiving baskets and turkeys to neighbors in need. November is a great month at First Christian Church for loving our neighbors.

So what comes next? How do we turn a good thing into a great thing?

Back to the book: The next step for churches who have a heart for serving others is to increase the frequency and diversity of serving opportunities throughout the year and to increase the percentage of church members who participate in hands-on ministry. In the 19th century, churches depended on the Ladies Aid Society to meet the needs of the community. (And let me just say, they were a

force to be reckoned with. Amazing women!) In the 20th century it became the task of the Outreach Committee or the Missions Committee to serve the community. Now we are rethinking that approach. Jesus taught that serving a neighbor in need is the way we fulfill the second great commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves. It is not the work of a committee. It is the work of every follower of Jesus.

Once we increase the opportunities to serve and get more members on board, the next step is to build relationships with the people we serve. Imagine getting to know the families who show up for Trunk or Treat or forming relationships with the international students who receive our “welcome” baskets of household items as they arrive for their first year at MSU. Wouldn’t it be wonderful to greet the children by name as deliver turkeys and groceries on Saturday, to send them birthday cards and attend their school plays.

Being in relationship with those we serve sometimes takes us out of our comfort zone. Years ago I took our youth group at Kingwood Christian Church to the Northeast Outreach Center in Porter on the Saturday before Thanksgiving. Hundreds of Thanksgiving baskets were being distributed. When we arrived there was already a long line of residents waiting for assistance. Our task was to load boxes of food into the cars of the clients. In the volunteer briefing, the director explained an additional expectation of all volunteers—one the food was loaded in the car, we would ask the family how we could pray for them and then pray together right there in the parking lot. There was definitely a deer-in-the-headlights expression on the faces of many of our teenagers. Praying out loud with strangers?!?

Those prayers were game changers for us. As we listened to the prayer requests, we got a window into the lives of the people we served. We learned how jobs are lost when the family car breaks down and there’s no public transportation. We learned about long-term sickness for the breadwinner in the family with no funds to pay doctor bills. And we heard so much gratitude expressed for simple blessings. Those short conversations transformed our prayers.

Throughout the morning, you could look out across the parking lot and see dozens of prayer circles with heads bowed and hands clasped. You could feel the Holy Spirit at work. Our limited expectations for our role in the ministry at hand and our limited understanding of the people we served had grown exponentially through the simple act of praying together.

As we submit our estimates-of-giving this week, rest assured that we have exciting plans for ministry in 2018. Next year will be all about loving our neighbors in Wichita Falls. As you know, Claire and Josh were hired to lead ministry to children and youth both inside our congregation and beyond our church walls. We look forward to your participation. While our Senior Minister Search Committee is hard at work in the months ahead finding our next pastor, the rest of us will be engaged in new experiences aimed at knowing and serving our neighbors.

With great expectation for our journey together,

*Renée*

# FCC MINISTRY NEWS AND CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

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

**November Ministry Meetings:** will be as follows:  
 Sunday, November 19<sup>th</sup>: **Membership** at 5:00 pm, F. Hall  
 Tuesday, November 21<sup>st</sup>:

**Prayer Team for Persecuted Christians** at 5:00 pm, Rm 310  
**Stewardship** at 6:00 pm, Rm 310

Tuesday, November 28<sup>th</sup>: **Executive Council** at 6:00 pm, Rm 310  
 If you will need childcare, please RSVP to the church office,  
 692-2282, by noon on Mondays, November 20<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Christian Women's Fellowship: Group Meetings** will be as follows: **Group 1** will meet on Monday, Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>, at 1:30 pm at Nancy Jolliff's home, 4811 Nursery. **Group 3** will meet on Monday, Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>, at 2:00 pm in Room 405.

**Tea at Two on Tuesdays!** Claudine Farrell & Renee Hoke host a gathering for women on Tuesday afternoons on the last Tuesday of the month. Bring your favorite tea cup and join us on Tuesday, November 28<sup>th</sup>, at 2 pm in the Church Parlor. There will be hot tea, tasty treats, and great conversation. Everyone is welcome—bring a friend or neighbor!

## Member News:

♥ **Hospitalized:** at URHCS is Gretchen Bridgman; at Kell West is Jimmy Smriglio; at the Gables is Ruth Beyer, at Windmill Rehab is Gayle Salazar. Released & back home is Mary K. Carroll.

♥ We condolences are extended to the family & friends of Mary Ann Cherry Dowell. Mary Ann passed away on November 6<sup>th</sup> in Axtell TX. Services were held on November 10<sup>th</sup> at Lunn's Chapel in Wichita Falls.

♥ Our sympathies are extended to the family & friends of Jane Sterling. Jane passed away on November 8<sup>th</sup> and services were held on November 15<sup>th</sup> at Lunn's Chapel.

♥ We also extend our condolences to Kathy Gholston & Family on learning of the death of Kathy's sister, Ann Katzer, on November 8<sup>th</sup> in Grove OK.

♥ Congratulations to Andy Hoke & Courtney Ryan, who were married on November 4<sup>th</sup> in Austin TX. Andy is the son of Rev. Renee Hoke.

♥ Congratulations to Hannah & Kyle Bailey on the birth of their daughter, Abigail Josephine Bailey, on November 1st. She weighed 8.2 lbs and was 20.5" long. Proud grandmother is Angela Muir McCulley and great-grandmother is Judy Muir.

**First Time Guests!** We are excited to report that the following persons visited for the first time on Sunday, November 5<sup>th</sup>: Ann Monlding & Austin Riddle.

**Persecuted Church Prayers This Week:** Pray for the nearly 100 million Christians who attend illegal house churches in China.

## From the Mailbox. . .

Dear Friends,

Thank you all so very much for your calls, cards, hugs and prayers, especially in these last few days. Our loss of our beloved Terry was made easier with each kind deed.

Your love is felt, and we do sincerely appreciate each and every one of you.

In Christ,  
 Lou & Janie

**Thanksgiving Baskets:** If you can help deliver Thanksgiving baskets, please sign up by calling the church office by noon on Friday, November 17. Arrive at the church in Fellowship Hall at 9:45 am on November 18. We'll provide a delivery route map and a delivery partner if you don't have one. Plan to spend an hour on deliveries and to be richly blessed.

The **Thanksgiving Offering** benefits the Colleges, Universities, Seminaries, and Divinity Houses affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). There are 14 undergraduate colleges and 7 theological seminaries. These learning communities are an extension of the church, challenging students to understand and respond to God's call to serve. This is a season in which we receive many opportunities for giving. Please consider a small donation to this one as we are feeling thankful for our ministers and their excellent training as we receive the Thanksgiving Offering on Sundays, November 19<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>.

**THE CHURCH BUILDING, OFFICES & ALL PROGRAMS** will be CLOSED on Thursday & Friday, November 23 & 24, for Thanksgiving.

**Advent Angels:** The season of Advent is coming upon us and a symbol commonly used in the advent season is an angel. We are asking the children of our congregation to take some time to create their own angel on paper provided in the church office. Please have the completed artwork returned to the church office by Nov. 29<sup>th</sup>. These angel creations will be displayed in our hallways and some will even be used as bulletin covers for worship! We hope that you will participate!

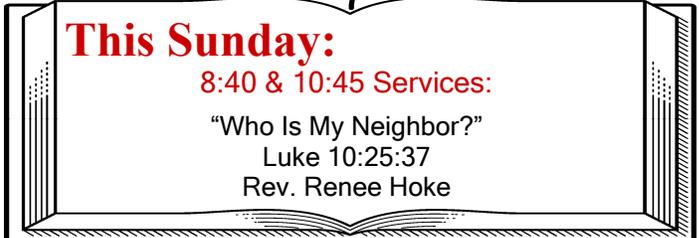
**Advent Workshop: A Family Tradition For Generations!** Each year the holy season of Advent begins with the aroma of stew simmering in the church kitchen, cornbread fresh out of the oven, trays of Christmas cookies, and the sight of Fellowship Hall lined with colorful craft tables where volunteers guide little ones in constructing crafts that teach the story of Christmas. This gathering is a favorite for children, parents and grandparents. Many of our members gather up the neighborhood kids each year for this Advent outing. Sunday, December 3, 5-7 pm, in Fellowship Hall. Donations are appreciated to cover the cost of the meal and craft supplies. (Kids menu includes chicken nuggets.) If you are a crafter who would like to help children create their Christmas crafts or help to prepare the meal, contact Cindy Hernandez, 642-0167.



The Children's Christmas Pageant is only a couple of weeks away! Mark your calendars for Wednesday, December 13th! Please contact me at [claire@firstchristianwf.com](mailto:claire@firstchristianwf.com) if your child would like to participate!

## FOR THE RECORD. . .

CGRM: (Tues., Nov. 7) . . . . .	21
The Neighborhood (Wed., Nov. 8) . . . . .	32
8:40 Worship . . . 41	10:45 Worship . . . 206
Total Worship . . . . .	279
Sunday School . . . . .	101
Sunday Receipts Needed Per Week	\$15,815.66
Sunday Receipts for 11/12/17	\$8,403.00
Through Nov. 13: Income \$632,128.97	Expenses \$706,724.20



**This Sunday:**  
**8:40 & 10:45 Services:**  
 "Who Is My Neighbor?"  
 Luke 10:25:37  
 Rev. Renee Hoke



**GO & DO**  
**THE SAME**

**LUKE 10:37**

**2018 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN**

***Commitment Sunday***

***November 19th***

**Rev. Renee Hoke, Preaching**

***Thanksgiving Fellowship Luncheon @Noon***

**With fried chicken, baked chicken, mashed potatoes,  
gravy, green beans, salad and dessert.**

**We hope you'll join us for a great meal  
and fellowship!**

**PLEASE MAKE YOUR RESERVATION TODAY!**

PLEASE PRAYERFULLY CONSIDER THE 2017 GROW ONE CHALLENGE TO  
INCREASE YOUR ESTIMATE OF GIVING TO OUR CHURCH BY 1 - PERCENT OF  
YOUR ANNUAL INCOME.

Thank you!



Dear Church Family,

With Dr. Hartman’s retirement, we are officially in a TIME OF TRANSITION...and in a time of transition, there is a FEAR OF LOST PROGRESS in ministry programs and gifts of time, talent and treasure to our church.

Your good-giving habits during this second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, despite our nation’s economic roller-coaster, has allowed our average annual gift to increase for 5-straight years – from \$3300 in 2012 to \$4200 this year.

Your good-giving habits have ALLOWED OUR MINISTRIES TO CONTINUE TO GROW. With the addition of our 2-new youth ministers – Claire and Josh – we are prepared for our future.

Our scripture reference for this year’s stewardship campaign is THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN where Jesus reminds us to “GO AND DO THE SAME” as we take care of the people in need...or to “GO AND GIVE THE SAME WAY THE SAMARITAN GAVE” as we take care of the needs in our church budget.

Annually, our church budget supports a really long list of ministries – just between now and the end of the year, that list includes –

Wednesday night Neighborhood worship  
Fellowship luncheons and dinners  
Advent Workshop

Children’s Christmas Pageant  
Christmas Eve Worship  
plus the ongoing monthly ministries

**THANK YOU** for your good Samaritan ministry...

**THANK YOU** for not hesitating to get personally involved with our church’s ministries...

**THANK YOU** for taking financial responsibility for our church’s ministries...

**THANK YOU** for continuing to accept the challenge to be a good Samaritan and not just walk past a problem that needs to be solved, and

**THANK YOU** for continuing your commitment during this time of transition.

This coming Sunday, November 19, is COMMITMENT SUNDAY. If you don’t have time to return your estimate-of-giving card to the church office this week, please bring it with you to church next Sunday and place it in the offering plate.

Along the way, please give prayerful consideration to your ability to contribute your time, talent and treasure to support the ministries of our church, and be sure to make your Commitment Sunday lunch reservations for next Sunday – when we’ll gather together in fellowship hall after 10:45 worship to celebrate our success.

As usual – in advance, thank you for your support. Now join me in the FCC cheer:

**WE ARE – FCC!**

**WE ARE – FCC!**

**WE ARE – FCC!**

Jerry Johnson, Stewardship Co-Chair

## OPPORTUNITIES

Sunday, November 19, 2017

STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN COMMITMENT SUNDAY

8:40 Worship (Chapel)  
9:30 Sunday School  
9:45 Journey Through Scripture (Parlor)  
10:45 Worship (Sanctuary)  
12:00 Thanksgiving Fellowship Luncheon (Fellowship Hall)  
3:45 Chancel Ringers (High School-Adults) (Stratten Hall)  
5:00 Membership Ministry Meeting (Fellowship Hall)  
5:00 Grow in Grace Choir (Grades K-5) (Stratten Hall)  
5:00 Chi Rho (Grades 6-8) & CYF (Grades 9-12) (Youth Rm/Gym)  
5:45 Young Disciples (Grades K-5) (Rm 402)

Monday, November 20, 2017

7:30-6:00 Children Come First (M-W)  
9:00-12:00 Young Ages School (M-Tu)  
10:15 FCC Staff Meeting (Rm 222)  
10:30 YAS Thanksgiving Feast (Mon. & Tues) (Fellowship Hall)  
1:30 CWF Group 1 Meeting (Nancy Jolliff's, 4811 Nursery)  
2:00 CWF Group 3 Meeting (Rm 405)  
6:00-8:00 CCF Training  
6:30 Sr. Minister Search Committee Meeting (Rm 405)  
7:30 Boy Scouts Troop 15 (Fellowship Hall)

Tuesday, November 21, 2017

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

Wednesday, November 22, 2017

Young Ages School Closed  
7:00 Elders' Breakfast (Rm 405/Chapel)  
NO Wednesday Evening Activities

Thursday & Friday, November 23-24, 2017

THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY  
CHURCH BUILDING, OFFICES & ALL PROGRAMS CLOSED

Sunday, November 26, 2017

8:40 Worship (Chapel)  
9:30 Sunday School  
9:45 Journey Through Scripture (Parlor)  
10:45 Worship (Fellowship Hall)  
5:00 Grow in Grace Choir (Grades K-5) (Stratten Hall)  
5:00 Chi Rho (Grades 6-8) & CYF (Grades 9-12) (Youth Rm/Gym)  
5:45 Young Disciples (Grades K-5) (Rm 402)  
6:00 Chancel Ringers (Stratten Hall)

Monday, November 27, 2017

7:30-6:00 Children Come First (M-F)  
9:00-12:00 Young Ages School (M-F)  
10:00 CWF Service Day-Wreath Hanging  
10:15 FCC Staff Meeting (Rm 222)  
6:30 Sr. Minister Search Committee Meeting (Rm 405)  
7:30 Boy Scouts Troop 15 (Fellowship Hall)

Tuesday, November 28, 2017

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

Wednesday, November 29, 2017

7:00 Elders' Breakfast (Rm 405/Chapel)  
5:30 The Neighborhood Meal: "Red River Hot Dogs" (Fellowship Hall)  
6:00-7:00 The Neighborhood Worship (Fellowship Hall)  
6:30-7:00 Young Disciples (Grades K-5) (Rm 405)  
7:00-8:00 Youth Activities (Grades 6-12) (Youth Room/Gym)  
7:00 Chancel Choir (High School-Adults) (Stratten Hall)

Thursday, November 30, 2017

Children Come First Pictures with Santa (Parlor)

## SERVING SUNDAY ELDERS

11/19: Ted Lauck, Ronnie James; Craig Reynolds, Presiding  
11/26: Mike Spiller Jr, Doug Thompson; Sally Hastings, Presiding

### DIACONATE COMMUNION VISITATION

11/19: Claudine Farrell, Jim LaValley  
11/26: Diane Spiller, Twila Boydston

### DIACONATE COMMUNION PREPARATION

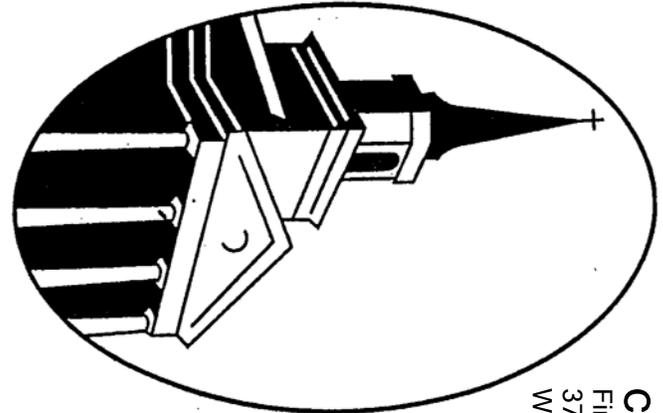
11/19: Jim & Karen LaValley  
11/26: Ainslee & John Buckley

### NOVEMBER DIACONATE SERVERS

Dave Brummett, Philip Dudenhoeffer, Claudine Farrell, Jim & Karen LaValley, Sarah Stewart, Andrew & Elise Allen, Twila Boydston, Jon Hartman, Diane Spiller, Ainslee & John Buckley, Karen & Terry Burross, Norma Hill & Weldon Roberts.

### THE CHURCH STAFF . . .

Church Number	940-692-2282	FAX Number	940-696-3085
Web Page:	www.firstchristianwf.com	Church e-mail:	susan@firstchristianwf.com
Rev. Renee Hoke, Acting Senior Minister	692-2282		
Cheryl Appling, Business Administrator	691-7265		
Jeanette Showalter, Director of Music Ministries	763-8515		
Claire Baer, Director of Children's Ministries	692-2282		
Josh deSteiguer, Director of Youth Ministries	692-2282		
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	



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