



Christian Challenger

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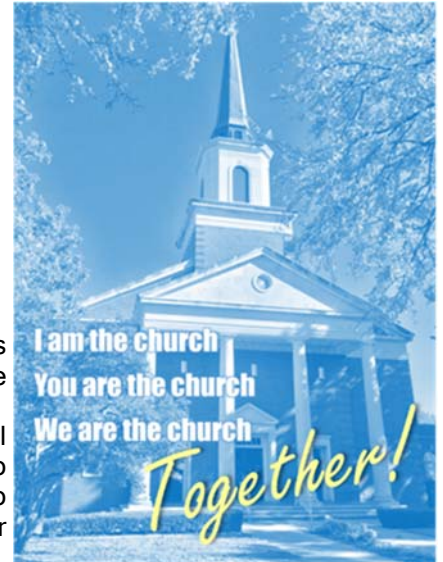
We are the Church Together!

New Sermon Series Begins September 16

*I am the church!
You are the church!
We are the church together!
All who follow Jesus,
All around the world,
Yes, we're the church together!*

Many of you probably remember singing that song as a child. The catchy lyrics and memorable tune implanted this truth in your hearts and minds. I am...you are...we are the church together.

But what makes us the church together? Over the next six weeks, we will examine what it means for the church to make an investment in deep relationships, to nurture God's principles for living, to equip individuals for sharing their faith stories, to encourage thankful praise, and to serve the hurts and hopes of the world. Invite your friends to join you each week as we dig into the purposeful design of the church.



September 16	<i>We are the Church Together - A Family</i>
September 23	<i>We are the Church Together - A Foundation</i>
September 30	<i>We are the Church Together - A Focus</i>
October 7	<i>We are the Church Together - A Fervor</i>
October 14	Senior Minister Installation Service
October 21	<i>We are the Church Together - A Force</i>



Courageous Followers

*September at The Neighborhood
Highlights Biblical Characters of Courage*

Wednesday is often referred to a "hump day" - the day in the middle of the work week. Common thought is that if you can make it to Wednesday, the rest of the week will be smooth sailing. Regardless of whether that is true for

you, worship at *The Neighborhood* will sustain and empower you through the rest of your week. Come praise God, engage with scripture, and share in community with others in the Fellowship Hall each Wednesday night, beginning with a meal at 5:30 pm and worship at 6:00 pm.

During the month of September, we will deep dive into the stories of several Biblical characters

who were called upon to make bold moves. If you need an injection of courage, or just want to learn more about what drove these individuals to do what they did, come be a neighbor at *The Neighborhood!*

September 13 - Nehemiah

September 20 - Ananias

September 27 - Rahab

Make Your Mark

Dr. Mark R. Bender
Senior Minister



Uncovering Our History

I have an uncle who is a professional percussionist. However, over the years, he has become well known as a flint-knapper. Knapping is the shaping of flint (or obsidian or other fracturing stones) by removing some parts of the stone (flaking) in order to make it into a tool. His interest in knapping led him more deeply into archeology - and to discovering how prehistoric tools and weapons were shaped and formed. For more than 25 years, he conducted technological analysis on the Marmes Rockshelter and contributed to reports on hundreds of other prehistoric sites in the Pacific Northwest. On numerous "digs" he helped to uncover prehistoric tools, learning more about the archeology, architecture, and history of ancient cultures.



In many ways, this is what I have been doing over the last two weeks - and something I will continue to do in the days ahead. I am digging into the history of First Christian Church, uncovering some of the stories and artifacts that have shaped this church into what it is today. I've only begun to scratch the surface, but this important work helps me better understand "why we do, what we do, the way we do it." In other words, connecting the dots of the past brings new meaning to the present, and reveals the DNA that guides the actions of this church,

Will Mancini, the author of *Church Unique* and Founder of *Auxano* (a church consulting group that FCC has partnered with in the recent past), suggests that visionary leaders must balance two things. They must protect the past as they champion the future. To do this well, Mancini suggests that leaders spend time "tapping into" the visionaries before us and around us. By hearing their stories and uncovering their legacies, we find narratives that motivate, anchor, and sharpen our future vision.

In the New Testament, there are several words which translate into the English word for time. *Chronos* is the one most familiar to us. It means successive or sequential time - the kind of time we find on our clocks and as dates on a historical timeline. Another Greek word for time, *Kairos*, describes an event or opportunity - a moment in time when perhaps everything changes because it is the "right time." Mike Breen and Walt Kallestad describe *Kairos* as "the eternal God breaking into your circumstances with an event that will gather loose ends of your life and knot them together in his hands." (Breen and Kallestad, *The Passionate Church*, Zondervan 2005). These are the moments recognized by the impact they leave and by the opportunities they present. Being healed by Jesus or touched by his ministry represented a *Kairos* moment for hundreds of Christ-followers in the New Testament. Certainly Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection from the grave were a

Kairos moment for Christians then and now. And in the same way, I know there are numerous stories of the *Kairos* moments in this congregation - stories which describe how this congregation has been touched by and blessed by the Spirit of Christ, and propelled into particular ministries and opportunities.

So what are those stories where the Spirit has moved mightily at FCC? What moments have shaped our history and will shape our future? What do you think I should know? Stop me in the halls or email me (mark@firstchristianwf.com) as those stories and relics come to mind. I look forward to uncovering more about FCC Wichita Falls.

Mark

Thank you for the Welcome!

Jodi, Chelsea, Abby, and I can't say thank you enough for the many ways we have been welcomed to Wichita Falls and to First Christian Church! We have been blessed by your warm hospitality, well-wishes, and prayers as this new chapter of our life unfolds. You have truly been "the church" to us, and for that we give thanks to you and to God!

With Gratitude,
Mark

Reconciliation Offering

How often the news includes a story about a situation in which anger and resentment have bubbled up from a segment of society that struggles with almost insurmountable poverty. The perception of being dismissed, ignored, or disrespected seems as likely to bring about violence as actual acts of racial hatred. But when communities listen to each other, acts of grace and mercy follow. The Special Offering is used to fund our Church's mission imperative to become a pro-reconciling and anti-racist church utilizing experiential education, inclusive worship and intentional dialogue. Our efforts to promote healing, relationship and restoration in the whole family of God are enlivened by funds from this offering. Through it we are able to provide programs for leadership development, curriculum for dialogue and learning, and partnerships within the Church and our communities.

Why Have a Special Offering? The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has a history dating from the 1960s of sharing our resources to address the racism of our society and the racism within our own church. We have called this process the Reconciliation Ministry.

We receive this offering in the fall, September 30th and October 7th, and use the funds throughout the year to give grants to the pro-reconciliation/anti-racism initiative to organize and to dismantle systems and structures that perpetuate this sin of division within the Church. This voluntary annual offering is the only source of funding for this ministry. **The form of this ministry may be changing, but the need for addressing racism has never been more obvious.**

As the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) lives into its identity as a "movement for wholeness in a fragmented world" contributions to this offering facilitate camp and conference and leadership development opportunities as well as programs for dialogue across differences that promotes life-giving community within our beloved church and among the whole family of God.

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 Member! It was a joy to welcome Dr. Mark, Jodi & Abby Bender into our fellowship by transfer of membership from Northway Christian Church of Dallas TX on Sunday, September 2nd. Mark is our new Senior Minister who began work on September 1st, Jodi is a family law attorney with Duffee & Eitzen in Dallas, and Abby is a junior at Rider High School. The family also includes daughter, Chelsea Branscum, who just graduated from the University of Missouri and is living & working in Columbia, Missouri. The family resides at 1 Jeannie Ct, 76308. Welcome, Mark, Jodi & Abby!

Acolyte Training! Calling all 3rd-5th graders! There will be an acolyte training session this Sunday, September 16th, at 9:45 am in the Sanctuary. This is a wonderful leadership role in the church for children and it is not a large time commitment. We hope to see you there!

September Ministry Meetings:

- Sunday, Sept. 16th: **Education** at 4:00 pm, Rm 310
 Membership at 5:00 pm, Rm 405
- Tuesday, Sept. 18th: **Stewardship** at 6:00 pm, Rm 310
 Worship at 7:00 pm, Rm 222
- Thursday, Sept. 20th: **Evangelism** at 5:30 pm, Rm 405
- Tuesday, Sept. 25th: **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, Sept. 17th & 24th.

Men's Breakfast & Bible Study! Do you enjoy good conversation? How about delicious breakfast food? Bring a friend and attend the FCC Men's Breakfast & Bible Study on Friday morning, September 14th, from 7:00-8:00 am, at the Hwy Café, 2808 Jacksboro Hwy.

Christian Women's Fellowship Group Meetings will be as follows: **Group 1** will meet on Monday, September 17th, at 1:30 pm at Cathy Biggs' home, 3718 Cedar Elm. **Group 2** will meet on Wednesday, September 19th, at 12:00 noon in Rm 405. **Group 3** will meet on Monday, September 17th, at 2:00 pm.

Fall Bible Study: *The Prodigal God* by Timothy Keller—In *The Prodigal God*, Timothy Keller uses one of the best-known Christian parables to reveal an unexpected message of hope and salvation. Taking his trademark intellectual approach to understanding Christianity, Keller uncovers the essential message of Jesus, locked inside his most familiar parable. Within that parable, Jesus reveals God's prodigal grace toward both the irreligious and the

moralistic. This book will challenge both the devout and skeptics to see Christianity in a whole new way.

Timothy Keller, a *New York Times* bestselling author, is the founding pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan, which he started in 1989 with his wife, Kathy, and three young sons. For 28 years he led a diverse congregation of young professionals that grew to a weekly attendance of over 5,000. Dr. Keller was born and raised in Pennsylvania and educated at Bucknell University, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and Westminster Theological Seminary.

Join Sheri Sutton as she leads this six-week study beginning Wednesday, September 19th, in Room 310. The first session will begin at 10:15 am. All subsequent sessions will begin at 10:30 am. Call the church office at 692-2282 to register. You may purchase a book for \$12 in the office or at the first session.

Tea at Two on Tuesdays! Bring your favorite tea cup for a gathering for women on Tuesday, September 25th, 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 Dave Clark; in Rehab at Dripping Springs TX is Kevin Coleman. Released and back home are Rita Cason & Bill Jennings.

♥Our sympathies are extended to Pat Thacker & Family on learning of the death of her husband, Bill Thacker, on September 9th. Services were September 8th at First United Methodist Church.

♥Our condolences are extended to Mark & Sherri Sutton on learning of the death of Mark's step-son, Matt Hammond, on September 6th, in Las Vegas NV.

♥We also extend our sympathies to Bobby Dean & Family on learning of the death of his mother, Jane Ann Dean, on September 11th in Bullhead City AZ.

♥Congratulations to Josh deSteiguer & Elizabeth Stites, who were married on September 1st in Weatherford TX.

♥Congratulations to Ashley Stewart & Brandon Warton, who were married on September 8th in the Sanctuary by Rev. Brett Coe. Ashley is the daughter of Stacey & David Strickland.

First Time Guests! We are excited to report that the following persons visited for the first time on Sunday, September 2nd: Alphonse Bell, Camden Chaney, Vladimir C. Corbette, Maryn Heil, Preston Martin, and Braidie Rathke; and on September 9th: Brianna Boone, Drake Grimes, Lindsey Hartman, and Jessica Rock.

FOR THE RECORD . . .	
CGRM: (Tues., Sept. 4)	25
The Neighborhood (Wed., Sept. 5)	21
8:40 Worship . . . 46 10:45 Worship	275
Total Worship	342
Sunday School	119
Sunday Receipts Needed Per Week	\$16,215.67
Sunday Receipts for 9/9/18	\$13,856.00
Through Sept. 10: Income \$521,604.32	Expenses \$535,352.07

This Sunday:

"We are the Church Together: A Family"

John 15:12-17

Dr. Mark Bender

OPPORTUNITIES

Sunday, September 16, 2018

8:40 Worship (Chapel)
 9:30 Sunday School
 9:30 Acolyte Training (Sanctuary)
 9:45 Journey Through Scripture Bible Study (Parlor)
 10:45 Worship (Sanctuary)
 3:45 Chancel Ringers (Adults) (Stratten Hall)
 4:00 Education Ministry Meeting (Rm 310)
 5:00-5:45 Grow in Grace Choir (Grades K-5) (Stratten Hall)
 5:00-7:00 Chi Rho & CYF (Grades 6-12) (Rm 403/Gym)
 5:45-7:00 Young Disciples (Grades K-5) (Rm 402)

Monday, September 17, 2018

7:30-6:00 Children Come First "CCF" (M-F)
 9:00-12:00 Young Ages School "YAS" (M-F)
 9:00 CCF Music (Rm 220)
 10:45 FCC Staff Meeting (Rm 222)
 1:30 CWF Group 1 (Cathy Biggs' home, 3718 Cedar Elm)
 2:00 CWF Group 3 (Rm 405)
 7:30 Boy Scouts Troop 15 (Fellowship Hall)
Tuesday, September 18, 2018
 10:00 YAS Music (Rm 220)
 2:00 Library Committee (Library)
 6:00 Stewardship Ministry Meeting (Rm 310)
 6:30 Common Ground Recovery Ministries Support Groups:
 Anger Management (Rm 309) Parenting (Rm 305 & 306)
 Rebuilding from Broken Relationships (Rm 307)
 7:00 Worship Ministry Meeting (Rm 222)

Wednesday, September 19, 2018

7:00 Elders' Breakfast (Rm 405/Chapel)
 9:00 CCF Chapel (Chapel) / 10:00 YAS Music (Rm 220)
 10:15 Sherri Sutton's Fall Bible Study (Rm 310)
 12:00 CWF Group 2 (Rm 405)
 5:30-6:00 The Neighborhood Meal (Fellowship Hall)
 6:00-7:00 The Neighborhood Worship (Fellowship Hall)
 6:00-7:00 First Kidz (Grades Pre-K-5th) (Rm 402)
 7:00-8:00 Youth Activities (Grades 6-12) (Rm 403/Gym)
 7:00-9:00 Chancel Choir (High School-Adults) (Stratten Hall)

Thursday, September 20, 2018

9:00 CWF Group 3 Birthday Breakfast (IHOP on SW Pkwy)
 1:30 Knit Wits (Parlor)
 5:30 Evangelism Ministry Meeting (Rm 405)

Friday, September 21, 2018

9:00 CCF Spanish (Rm 220)
 5:30 CMF's MSU Mustang Meals (Fellowship Hall)

Sunday, September 23, 2018

8:40 Worship (Chapel)
 9:30 Sunday School
 9:45 Journey Through Scripture Bible Study (Parlor)
 10:45 Worship (Sanctuary)
 3:45 Chancel Ringers (Adults) (Stratten Hall)
 5:00 Membership Ministry Meeting (Rm 405)
 5:00 Grow in Grace Choir (Grades K-5) (Stratten Hall)
 5:00-7:00 Chi Rho & CYF (Grades 6-12) (Rm 403/Gym)
 5:30-7:00 Young Disciples (Grades K-5) (Rm 402)

Monday, September 24, 2018

7:30-6:00 Children Come First "CCF"(M-F)
 9:00-12:00 Young Ages School "YAS" (M-F)
 9:00 CCF Music (Rm 220)
 10:45 FCC Staff Meeting (Rm 222)
 7:30 Boy Scouts Troop 15 (Fellowship Hall)

Tuesday, September 25, 2018

10:00 YAS Music (Rm 220)
 2:00 Tea at Two (Parlor)
 2:00 Library Committee (Library)
 6:00 Executive Council Meeting (Rm 310)
 6:30 Common Ground Recovery Ministries Support Groups:
 Anger Management (Rm 309) Parenting (Rm 305 & 306)
 Rebuilding from Broken Relationships (Rm 307)

Wednesday, September 26, 2018

7:00 Elders' Breakfast (Rm 405/Chapel)
 9:00 CCF Chapel (Chapel) / 10:00 YAS Music (Rm 220)
 10:30 Sherri Sutton's Fall Bible Study (Rm 310)
 5:30 Neighborhood Meal (Fellowship Hall)
 6:00-7:00 The Neighborhood Worship (Fellowship Hall)
 6:00-7:00 First Kidz (Grades Pre-K-5th) (Rm 402)
 7:00-8:00 Youth Activities (Grades 6-12) (Rm 403/Gym)
 7:00-9:00 Chancel Choir (High School-Adults) (Stratten Hall)

Friday, September 28, 2018

9:00 CCF Spanish (Rm 220)

SERVING SUNDAY ELDERS

9/16: Debbi Schmidt, Rick Appling; Dwight Ross III, Presiding

9/23: Cal Edgemon, David Collins; Cheryl Smiley, Presiding

DIACONATE COMMUNION VISITATION

9/16: Lynette Gill, Scot Hafley, Kyle Burross

9/23: Buddy Edgemon, Ainslee Buckley

DIACONATE COMMUNION PREPARATION

9/16: Chris Showalter & Buddy Edgemon

9/23: Colleen James & Sandy Hay

SEPTEMBER DIACONATE SERVERS

Cheryl Caraway & John Buckley, Co-Captains

Bob & Mary Carlton, Jill Griffin, Colleen James, Karen & Terry Burross, Sandy Hay,

Chris Showalter, Ashley & Kyle Burross, Buddy Edgemon, Lynette Gill, Scot Hafley,

Ainslee Buckley, Braelyn Crowe.

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. Mark Bender, Senior Minister 692-2282

Josh deSteiguer, Director of Youth Ministries 692-2282

Claire Baer, Director of Children's Ministries 692-2282

Jeanette Showalter, Director of Music Ministries 763-8515

Cheryl Appling, Business Administrator 691-7265

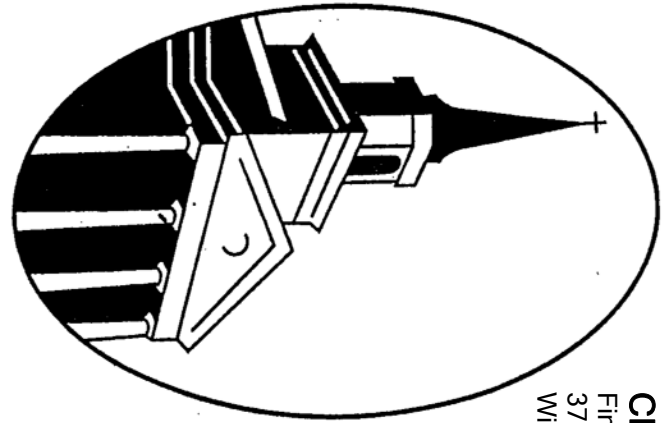
Heather Dickerson, Director of Children Come First 687-2231

Alisa Gardner, Director of Young Ages School 692-3640

Rev. Margaret Scales, Common Ground Recovery Ministries 337-1712

Susan Marrs, Executive Secretary Tina Williams, Financial Secretary

Ann Hunter, Receptionist Debbie Watson, Organist



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