



Christian Challenger

Vol. 65

November 7, 2018

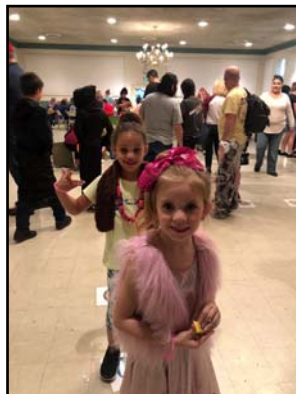
No. 23

Thanksgiving Baskets

If you can help deliver Thanksgiving baskets, please sign up now by calling the church office, 692-2282, by Wednesday, November 14th. Arrive at the church in Fellowship Hall at 9:45 am on Saturday, November 17th. We will provide a delivery route, and a delivery partner if you do not have one. Plan to spend an hour on deliveries, and to be richly blessed.



2018 Trunk or Treat Fun!



Support the Thanksgiving Special Offering

Disciples have long been characterized as having a "thinking faith." That's why from the very beginnings of our movement, Disciples have founded institutions of higher learning, encouraging students in their intellectual pursuits. Many members of First Christian Church were shaped by the education they received at a college, university, seminary, or divinity house affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), joining hundreds of thousands of other students who received a quality education within our Disciples heritage.

On November 18 and November 25, the Thanksgiving Special Offering will be collected during worship. Gifts made to this over-and-above offering help to underwrite the education of students attending one of the 14 undergraduate institutions and seven seminaries/divinity houses affiliated with the Disciples.

You are invited to consider the many generations of leaders who have been impacted by the Higher Education ministries of the Disciples as you generously support the 2018 Thanksgiving Special Offering.

**THANKSGIVING
OFFERING NOV 2018**
www.DisciplesMissionFund.org

Colleges & Universities
of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Seminaries & Divinity Houses
of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Higher Education & Leadership Ministries
of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Fall Rally Season

It's Fall Rally season for our youth. Last weekend was an awesome time at Chi Rho Fall Rally in Athens with Michael Stewart and Riley Aikin. This weekend we are headed back for CYF Fall Rally with Abby Bender, Hannah Earley, and JJ Johnson. These retreats provide such a wonderful opportunity for our youth to grow their faith alongside many other Disciples youth from our area. Pray for us as we travel this Friday and Sunday!

Make Your Mark

Dr. Mark R. Bender
Senior Minister



A Maturing Heart

In the last *Make Your Mark* column, I noted that we are in Stewardship season - a season of the year that may be just as important to our spiritual lives as Advent or Lent. I also shared Wesley Willmer's stages of generosity (which were based on James Fowler's stages of faith). Willmer's stages ranged from an *Imitator* ("I give because I see others giving and I imitate them") to a *Mature Steward* ("I am content with my daily provision and recognize my need to be a faithful steward of God's possessions"). At the end of the column, I asked you consider which stage characterized you presently. And then I promised to talk about the steps one can take towards mature stewardship.

Almost 15 years ago, Willow Creek Community Church, a suburban Chicago megachurch, commissioned a congregational survey. The original intent of this survey was to gain an understanding of the spiritual lives of their congregation members - how they grow and what the church could do to help them. The expectation was that the survey results would show that the church was doing well when it came to spiritual growth. Instead, it revealed that nearly one out of every four people at Willow Creek were stalled in their spiritual growth or dissatisfied with the church. (Hawkins/Parkinson, *Reveal: Where Are You?*, Willow Creek Resources 2007).

Yet, out of the "pain" of these results came some useful information and best practices, perhaps the most helpful being the discovery of what they called a spiritual continuum. The spiritual continuum provided a framework for talking about the stages of faith development. On one end were those who were just exploring Christianity, for whom faith is not a significant part of their life. On the other end were those who are Christ-centered, for whom everything they do is a reflection of Christ. Most importantly, this continuum didn't center on how much time one spent at church. It centered on a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.

What their research found is that there was a high correlation between spiritual growth [spiritual attitudes (love for God, love for people) and spiritual behaviors (evangelism, serving, giving, etc.)] and the later stages of the continuum (Close to Christ and Christ-Centered). In other words, the deeper one's relationship with Jesus Christ, the more likely one's attitudes and behaviors

reflected this relationship.

All of this to say, to talk about a mature steward, it is impossible to separate the giving of one's life and resources from one's spiritual walk with Christ. One could give millions of dollars and still not be a mature steward if she or he are not making Christ the focus of their lives... and the reason for their giving. That's why Wesley Willmer suggests that the first step for becoming a mature steward is to declare who is the Lord of your life. As Willmer points out, Jesus put the choice in stark terms: "No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth" (Matthew 6:24 NRSV).

While Willmer goes on to describe ten steps for mature stewardship, I like the simplicity that Andy Stanley, the noted author and pastor of North Point Community Church in Atlanta, provides. He suggests that just as a good educational plan builds upon the "three R's," a good plan for giving builds upon "three P's" - priority giving, percentage giving, and progressive giving.

The first P - **priority** - suggests that giving shouldn't be a priority in your monthly budget, but *the* priority. Whatever you place first will take precedence over everything else that comes after it. By prioritizing God in what you give, whether it be from your checkbook or your calendar, everything else is properly put in line behind the priority of God's work.

The second P - **percentage** - is designed to keep fear from influencing your wallet. When you commit to a percentage of your income, it's pretty cut and dry. Whatever percentage you choose, you have a target to aim for no matter how much your emotions fluctuate.

The third P - **progressive** - suggests that one should be progressively increasing the percentage you give over the years. Just as spiritual growth comes from trusting

God more and more, so, too, your growth as a giver comes from trusting God through giving more and more. Giving, like every other aspect of spiritual growth, shouldn't be mundane and routine, but should be an exciting, close-encounter-with-God experience. (Stanley, *Fields of Gold*, Tyndale 2004)

This Sunday, we will formally wrap up our stewardship emphasis as a congregation. But the fact is, stewardship must always be an emphasis in our lives. This doesn't mean a never-ending, year-round campaign to support the ministry of the church. What it does mean is that every decision you make is

one of stewardship. How you spend your time, how you allocate your resources, how you understand who is the owner of your possessions...today, tomorrow, or six months from now - these are stewardship decisions. The opportunity is there for us to take the next step in our faith...but it's a matter of the heart. So what is your heart telling you to do? (2 Corinthians 9:7)

Mark



FCC MINISTRY NEWS AND CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS



Veteran's Day: Sunday, November 11

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 Hilah Burkett into our fellowship this past Sunday by confession of faith. Hilah attended at the invitation of Mistie Seguire. Her contact info is: 2127 Ave F, 76309, hilahburkett24@gmail.com. Welcome, Hilah!

Men's Breakfast & Bible Study! Bring a friend and attend the FCC Men's Breakfast & Bible Study on Friday morning, November 9th, from 7:00-8:00 am, at the Hwy Café, 2808 Jacksboro Hwy.

Coats For Kids: November means Coats for Kids time. This Sunday, November 11th, during both worship services we will be dedicating the purchased coats. Delivery of the coats will be the week of November 12-16th for those who would like to help.

November Ministry Meetings: will be as follows:

- Monday, Nov. 12th. **Property** at 6:00 pm, Rm 310
- Tuesday, Nov. 13th. **Evangelism** at 5:30 pm, Rm 222
- Education** at 6:00 pm, Library
- Outreach** at 6:00 pm, Rm 310
- Worship** at 7:00 pm, Rm 222
- Sunday, Nov. 18th. **Membership** at 5:00 pm, Rm 405
- Tuesday, Nov. 20th. **Stewardship** at 6:00 pm, Rm 310
- Tuesday, Nov. 27th. **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, Nov. 12th, 19th & 26th.

Christian Women's Fellowship The November CWF Luncheon will be Monday, November 12th, at 11:45 am in the Fellowship Hall. The speaker will be Chris Mary Latimer with Wichita Falls 99 Women Pilots. The devotional will be given by Norma Hill and the service offering will go to the Wichita Falls 99 women Pilots. 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, November 19th, at 1:30 pm in the Church Parlor. **Group 2** will meet on Wednesday, November 21st, at 12:00 noon in Rm 405. **Group 3** will meet on Monday, November 19th, at 2:00 pm in Rm 405.

Thank You, Thank You, Thank You!! Young Ages School would like to thank all of the church members who participated in our Kringle fundraiser. Over

\$1,970 was raised for our school. These funds will help purchase new toys and supplies for classrooms and help cover the year end budget. Thank you again for your continued support of our program.

We ordered a few extra: 1 Pecan, 1 Raspberry, 2 Apple, 3 Cherry, 3 Cherry Cheese, 1 Chocolate Pecan, 4 Cinnamon Roll, 4 Cream Cheese and 2 Turtle. If you would like to purchase one, please contact the Young Ages Office at 692-3640. They are \$15 each and will be here in time for Thanksgiving!

Member News:

♥**Hospitalized:** at Senior Care Rehab is Lou James; at House of Hope Rehab is Pat Thacker. Released and back home is Rita Cason, Darlene Moore.

♥Our sympathies are extended to Mike Street, Melissa Hogan, Sherri Webb & Mimi Miller and Families on learning of the death of their wife and sister, Robin Webb Street, on October 23rd.

♥Our condolences are extended to Mary Nell Taylor and Family on learning of the death of her husband, Charles Taylor, on October 30th. Services will be Monday, November 19th, at 11:00 am at First United Methodist Church of Wichita Falls.

♥Congratulations to Ashley & Bret Schmidt on the birth of their son, Brayden Chandler Schmidt, on October 25th in Austin TX. Brayden weighed 7 lbs and was 20 inches long. Proud grandparents are Debbi & Dennis Schmidt; aunt is Jodi Schmidt, and great-aunt is Juanita Pratt.

First Time Guests! We are excited to report that the following persons visited for the first time on Sunday, October 28th: Maggy & Lucy Anderson.



Thanksgiving

**The Church Building, Offices & All Programs
will be CLOSED on
Thursday & Friday, November 22nd & 23rd,
for the Thanksgiving Holiday!**

FOR THE RECORD . . .	
CGRM: (Tues., Oct. 30)	30
The Neighborhood (Wed., Oct. 31)	16
8:40 Worship . . . 37 10:45 Worship	201
Total Worship	254
Sunday School	118
Sunday Receipts Needed Per Week	\$16,215.67
Sunday Receipts for 11/4/18	\$11,870.00
Through Oct. 31: Income \$627,877.79	Expenses \$660,228.70

This Sunday:

“But Who Am I?”
1 Chronicles 29:10-22
Dr. Mark R. Bender



What shall we bring?

Stewardship Campaign for 2019

Commitment Sunday, November 11th

Dr. Mark Bender, Preaching

But Who Am I? - 1 Chronicles 29:10-22

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 *2019 GROW ONE CHALLENGE* TO
INCREASE YOUR ESTIMATE OF GIVING TO OUR CHURCH BY
1 - PERCENT OF YOUR ANNUAL INCOME.**

Thank you!

Catherine Earley's Stewardship Moment From Sunday, November 4, 2018

Good morning – I'm here to remind you that commitment Sunday is only a week away on November 11th so make your reservations in the church office.

That Sunday, after this worship service we're all invited to lunch in fellowship hall to celebrate our stewardship decisions for 2019 with the traditional picnic-style menu will be baked or fried chicken with all the trimmings.

I'm also here this morning to give you a short stewardship devotional, beginning with this thought – ***"we make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."***

Winston Churchill said that...and it ties back in to Dr. Bender's message last week.

He asked us to **imagine the impact** we could have with our growing children and youth programs...as well as all the families that call First Christian home...plus the lives impacted through the ministries of common ground recovery ministry.

He also asked us to **imagine the impact** we could have with our gifts on the families who trust their children to us each day at Children Come First and Young Ages School.

That's just the tip of the iceberg when you consider the gifts we share with other ministries through our church's many outreach involvements...and in-reach involvements like bible studies and Christian women's and men's fellowships.

John Bunyan wrote "Pilgrim's Progress" and also wrote that ***"you have not lived until you have done something for someone who can never re-pay you."***

You and your family's decision on how much time, talent and treasure you can share with our church for next year is exactly that...your individual decision.

Please prayerfully consider your ability to **"grow-one"** – by increasing your estimate-of-giving for next year by just one-percent of your annual income.

I hope you've enjoyed Dr. Bender's short stewardship devotionals in your e-mail in-box as much as I have this past week – and thanks for your continued financial support of our church.

And don't forget to smile as you consider all this stewardship information because the lord loves a cheerful giver.

OPPORTUNITIES

Sunday, November 11, 2018 COMMITMENT SUNDAY

VETERAN'S DAY / COATS FOR KIDS DEDICATION

8:40 Worship (Chapel)

9:30 Sunday School

9:45 Journey Through Scripture Bible Study (Parlor)

10:45 Worship (Sanctuary)

12:00 Commitment Sunday/Thanksgiving Fellowship Lunch (F. Hall)

3:45 Chancel Ringers (Adults) (Stratten Hall)

4:00 Nominating Committee 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, November 12, 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)

9:00 Sort & Deliver Coats (M-F)

10:00 YAS Music (Rm 220) (Mon., Tues. & Wed.)

10:30 CWF Board Meeting (Rm 310)

11:45 CWF Luncheon (Fellowship Hall)

6:00 Property Ministry Meeting (Rm 310)

7:30 Boy Scouts Troop 15 (Fellowship Hall)

Tuesday, November 13, 2018

2:00 Library Committee (Library)

5:30 Evangelism Ministry Meeting (Rm 222)

6:00 Education Ministry Meeting (Library)

6:00 Outreach Ministry Meeting (Rm 310)

6:30 Common Ground Recovery Ministries Support Groups

7:00 Worship Ministry Meeting (Rm 222)

Wednesday, November 14, 2018

7:00 Elders' Breakfast (Rm 405/Chapel)

9:00 CCF Chapel (Chapel)

12:00 YAS Staff Meeting (Rm 217)

5:30 CMF's MSU Mustang Meals (Fellowship Hall)

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, November 15, 2018

9:00 CWF Group 3 Birthday Breakfast (IHOP-SW Pkwy)

10:00 YAS Thanksgiving Feast (Thurs. & Fri.) (Fellowship Hall)

1:30 Knit Wits (Parlor)

Friday, November 16, 2018

9:00 CCF Spanish (Rm 220)

2:45 CCF Thanksgiving Feast (Fellowship Hall)

Saturday, November 17, 2018

9:45 Deliver Thanksgiving Baskets (Fellowship Hall)

Sunday, November 18, 2018 THANKSGIVING OFFERING

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 Thanksgiving Meal & Mission Project
(Grades K-5) (Fellowship Hall)

Monday, November 19, 2018

7:30-6:00 Children Come First "CCF"(M-W)

Young Ages School "YAS" Closed This Week

9:00 CCF Music (Rm 220)

1:30 CWF Group 1 (Parlor)

2:00 CWF Group 3 (Rm 405)

5:00-7:00 CCF Training (Rm 405)

7:30 Boy Scouts Troop 15 (Fellowship Hall)

Tuesday, November 20, 2018

2:00 Library Committee (Library)

6:00 Stewardship Ministry Meeting (Rm 310)

6:30 Common Ground Recovery Ministries Support Groups:

Wednesday, November 21, 2018

7:00 Elders' Breakfast (Rm 405/Chapel)

9:00 CCF Chapel (Chapel)

12:00 CWF Group 2 (Rm 405)

NO Wednesday Evening Activities

Thursday & Friday, November 22 & 23, 2018

THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY:

Church Building, Offices & All Programs Closed

SERVING SUNDAY ELDERS

11/11: Doug Thompson, Woody Gossom; Alice Gordon, Presiding

11/18: Polly Tonemah, Ricky Scales; Sally Hastings, Presiding

DIACONATE COMMUNION VISITATION

11/11: Jon Hartman, Kris Gossom, Lee Bybee

11/18: Sarah Cook, Mark Turnbow, Debbie Turnbow

DIACONATE COMMUNION PREPARATION

11/11: Kris Gossom & Ann Kable

11/18: Sarah Cook & Hannah Earley

NOVEMBER DIACONATE SERVERS

Sandra Ross & Sherry Martin, Co-Captains

Lee Bybee, Jon Hartman, Sharon Roach, Debbie & Mark Turnbow, Sarah Cook, Sally Wilson, David Wyatt, Debi & Larry Ballard, Alan Freeman, Kris Gossom, Ann Kable, Hannah Earley, Hannah Ward.

THE CHURCH STAFF...

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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

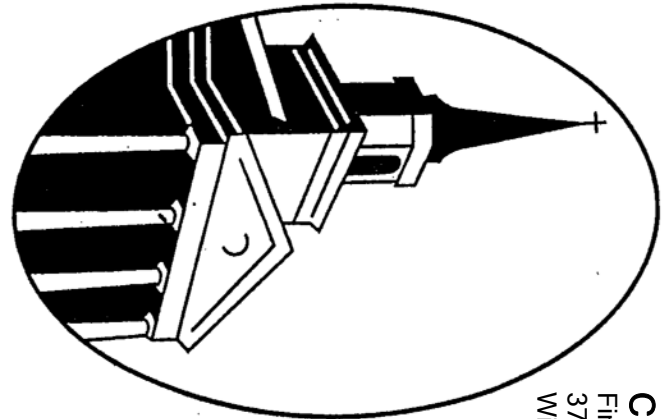
Heather Dickerson, Director of Children Come First 687-2231

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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