



Christian Challenger

Vol. 66

January 2, 2019

No. 1

Heartfelt THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

We are so thankful for all of our volunteers who have shared their time and talents with First Christian Church. We want to celebrate you by hosting a luncheon in your honor!

If you have been a volunteer at FCC join us for an appreciation luncheon on Sunday, January 13th, at 12:00 noon in the Fellowship Hall. Make your reservations in worship this Sunday or by calling the Church Office, 692-2282. We hope to see you there!

Get to Work! at The Neighborhood

A new series called *Get to Work!* begins on Wednesday, January 9, at The Neighborhood. During this series, Howard Thurman's poem, *The Work of Christmas*, will serve as the basis for worship and a weekly service project. So start your new year off by praising God, engaging with scripture, serving the world, and sharing 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.



FAQ

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Have you ever wondered...why bad things happen to good people? Why wives are asked to submit to their husbands...#really? What happens to us when we die? Does Satan really exist? What the Bible really says about creation and evolution? When Jesus will return?

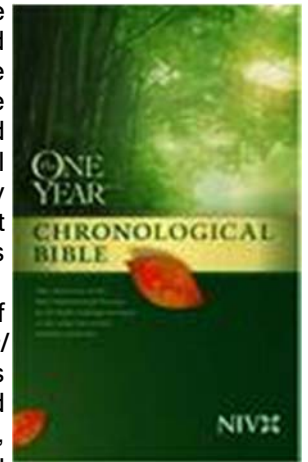
These are just some of the questions of life and faith that Christians frequently struggle to address. Come wrestle with these questions and to hear what the Bible says about these topics at 8:40 am or 10:45 am on Sunday mornings beginning January 13.

Through the Bible in a Year Study

Many FCC members have committed to or expressed interest in reading through the entire Bible during 2019. The first "discussion and encouragement gathering" will take place on Thursday, January 10, at 6:00 pm in Room 310. At that gathering, we will set dates and times for future meetings.

If you did not pick up one of the *One Year Chronological Bibles* that we are using for this study, more have been ordered and will be available on Sunday, January 6. In the meantime, you can stay on track by reading the following:

- January 1 - Genesis 1:1 - 3:24
- January 2 - Genesis 4:1 - 6:22; 1 Chronicles 1:1-4;
- January 3 - Genesis 7:1 - 9:29
- January 4 - Genesis 10:1-11:26; 1 Chronicles 1:5-27
- January 5 - Job 1:1-3:26
- January 6 - Job 4:1-7:21



Gathering

The Gathering – New Sunday Evening Group Begins January 13

If you've been looking for a time to gather with church friends to enjoy Bible Study and shared community but you're not a morning person, then we have a deal for you! The Gathering meets on Sunday evenings at 5:15 pm to visit and be spiritually fed (and we will feed your tummy too! :) as Dr. Bender leads a study on *10 Dumb Things Smart Christians Believe*. This exciting new journey will begin on January 13, 2019, in the Parlor.

While geared towards young adults (single or married) and parents of young children, all are welcome. [From 5:00-7:00 pm, Young Disciples (Grades K-5) meet for choir and youth activities. Children under 5 meet to play and experience coming to church with their families].

So make this your New Year's promise to nourish and feed your spiritual health.

Make Your Mark

Dr. Mark R. Bender
Senior Minister



Growing Young

It is on the wish list of almost every church. It is on the wish list of this church - First Christian Church of Wichita Falls. (I know - it was one of the things the Search Committee and I discussed last summer). As churches, we want to involve and retain young people (ages 15-29). Yet, the question is how? How do we attract young people and young families?

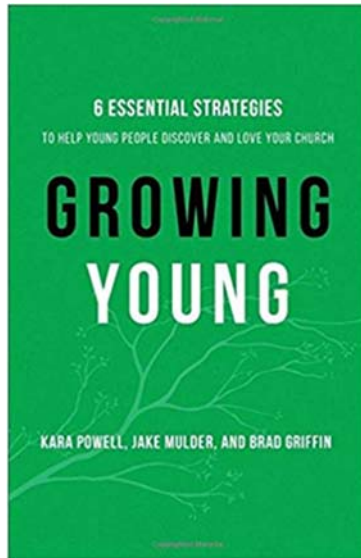
The truth is all congregations grow old. With age comes great wisdom, beauty, and maturity. In churches, aging is symbolized by a network of deep roots and a rich harvest of committed Christians. Growing old isn't bad. It's just not the whole story, because every church needs young people. Churches need their enriching passion, their curiosity, and their authenticity.

But young people also need a thriving church. A thriving church that both grounds them in community and sends them out to serve. The church needs young people and they need the church. One without the other is incomplete.

Several years ago, the Fuller Youth Institute, led by Brad Griffin, Kara Powell, and Jake Mulder, conducted research with over 360 congregations of various sizes and denominations who were "growing young." These congregations had ministries with young people that were growing numerically, were engaging a large number of young people relative to the size of their congregation, or had something "exciting or missional" going on with young people. The research and the practical ideas which resulted from this study were published in book titled *Growing Young* (Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 2016). This is a book the church staff will be studying together this year.

But before we dig into the results of this study, a question has to be answered. What do young people add to the congregation? As Griffin, Powell, and Mulder noted, they don't tithe much. They can be a bit flaky. They prefer different - and way louder - music. But what they do bring is "vitality." Young people infuse congregations with energy and intensity. And as these researchers began to better understand how young people contribute, they realized they added more to congregations:

- *More service* - young people help congregations accomplish their mission.
- *More passion* - young people pour themselves wholeheartedly into what they do, which energizes those around them and increases what is possible.



- *More innovation* - churches willing to twist off the cap release innovative energy that can transform their communities.
- *More money* - when leaders at churches growing young were asked how teenagers and young adults contribute financially to their church, the answer was "not much." But those same leaders quickly added that young people's energy attracts older adults with more financial resources, who in turn generously support the ministries of the church. Plus, as those young people gain vocational stability, they become part of the church's financial backbone.
- *More overall health* - churches that grow young don't inevitably reach other generations less effectively. Instead, stronger ministry to young people bulks up the ministry muscles of the entire congregation.

While there have been lots of theories about how to attract and minister to these young people, the "Growing Young" research showed there were some things churches didn't need:

1. *A precise size* - there was no statistical relationship between church size and effectiveness with reaching young people.
2. *A trendy location or region* - equally robust ministry was found in rural one-stoplight towns and middle class suburbia as in bustling urban centers and near dynamic college campuses.
3. *An exact age* - there was as much life change taking place in churches a century old as there was in church plants.
4. *A popular denomination...or lack of denomination* - God works through churches of all stripes.
5. *An off-the-charts cool quotient* - relational warmth, not hip factor, is the new cool.
6. *A big, modern building* - for teenagers and young adults, feeling at home transcends any building.
7. *A big budget* - churches that grow young intentionally invest in young people, and most often that translates into a financial investment. But not always. Less resourced congregations creatively support young people in other ways.
8. *A "contemporary" worship service* - while many young people are drawn to "casual and contemporary" worship, others are drawn to "smells and bells" and everything in between. While the churches studied were likely to prefer modern worship in some or all of their worship contexts, they didn't depend on that alone as a magnet to draw young people.
9. *A watered-down teaching style* - for today's young people, growing young doesn't mean talking less about Jesus or the cost of following him.
10. *A hyper-entertaining ministry program* - slick is no guarantee of success.

What the research also indicated was there was no formula for growing young. However, the more congregations tended to demonstrate six core commitments, the more they tended to effectively engage teenagers and emerging adults. And in the next few *Make Your Mark* columns, we will unpack this six core commitments...and what they might look like for First Christian Church.

Mark

FCC MINISTRY NEWS AND CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

The **Challenger** is biweekly, with the next publication on January 16! FCC Ministry News is sent by email every Monday.

Pantry Sunday for Interfaith Outreach Services will be this Sunday, January 6th. Items for collection will be **boxes of macaroni and cheese and cans of Spaghettios**. Also, if you travel and have any unopened hotel toiletries, Interfaith Outreach Services would love to have them for their care sacks. Thank you for the 104 pounds of items delivered for the month of December!

Prime Timers Luncheon will be this Sunday, January 6th, at 12:00 noon in the Fellowship Hall.

New in 2019: Coming this Monday, January 7th, is a new stretch class! If you are feeling stressed from the holidays or everyday life, join us in the gym every Monday at 6 pm for an hour. This class is open for everyone....men and women. Lora Vailes is teaching the class. She has taught classes in spin, sculpt, pump, Pilates, yoga and has been training since 1999. She will guide us through some easy stretches to relieve the stress on our muscles. It will cost \$5 a class. Yoga mats and stretch bands are available but you are welcome to bring your own. Please come and bring a friend. If you have any questions ask Cindy Hernandez.

The January gathering of **On Hold**, our support group for caregivers of all kinds, will be Tuesday, January 8th, at 2414/2416 Barbados from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm. Just look for the ON HOLD sign out in front. This informal, come-and-go setting includes a light meal/refreshments and conversation aimed at support and encouragement. ON HOLD is a ministry to women and men who place their own lives "on hold" while they care for loved ones--grandchildren, aging parents, or anyone in between.

January Meetings: will be as follows:

- Tuesday, Jan. 8th: **Property** at 6:00 pm, Rm 310
Outreach at 6:00 pm, Library
- Tuesday, Jan. 15th: **Education** at 6:00 pm, Rm 405
Stewardship at 6:00 pm, Rm 310
Worship at 7:00 pm, Rm 222
- Sunday, Jan. 20th: **Membership** at 5:00 pm, Rm 405
- Tuesday, Jan. 22nd: **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, Jan. 7th, 14th, & 21st.

Men's Breakfast & Bible Study! Bring a friend and attend the FCC Men's Breakfast & Bible Study on Friday morning, January 11th, from 7:00-8:00 am, at the Hwy Café, 2808 Jacksboro Hwy.

Christian Women's Fellowship The January CWF Luncheon will be Monday, January 14th, at 11:45 am in the Fellowship Hall. The speaker will be Laura Grimsinger with CASA. The devotional will be given by Diana Costello and the service offering will go to CASA. 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 on Monday, January 21st: **Group 1** will meet at 1:30 pm at Judy Muir's home, 2410 Farington; and **Group 3** will meet at 2:00 pm in Room 405. On Wednesday, January 23rd, **Group 2** will meet at 12:00 noon in Room 405.

Member News:

♥**Hospitalized:** at the Gables is Ruth Beyer.

♥Our sympathies are extended to Bruce Harris & Family on learning of the death of his mother, Shirley Harris, on December 22nd. Graveside services were December 27th in Gustine TX.

♥Our condolences are extended to Rita Cason & Linda C. Carr and Family on learning of the death of their sister-in-law and aunt, Norma Adair, on December 30th.

♥We also extend our sympathies to Susan Marrs & Family on learning of the death of her mother, Madra Marrs, on December 20th. Services were December 23rd in Graham TX.

♥Congratulations to Beth & Matt Wilson on the birth of their son, Benjamin Matthew Wilson, on December 19th in Oklahoma City OK. Proud grandparents are Judy Gilkerson-Gore & Wayne Gore and the late Perry Gilkerson; and great-grandparents are Carole & Dan Davis.

First Time Guests! We are excited to report that the following persons visited for the first time on Sunday, December 23rd: Elizabeth Cenk, Danny & Jeannie Wagoner; on Christmas Eve, December 24th: Charlotte Brooks, Aleisha Escobedo & Family, Cindy Witherspoon; and on Sunday, December 30th: John Murray.

Stewardship Campaign Update for 2019

As of Monday, December 31st, we have received 134 estimates of giving totaling \$698,581.00....with an average pledge of \$5,213.29. That represents an average pledge increase of 13%.

If you haven't had the opportunity to make your estimate of giving, we invite you to join us in our commitment for 2019 to begin another year of mission and ministry at First Christian Church. There is still important work to be done, needs to be addressed, hearts to turn, and good news to be shared.

Estimate of giving cards are available at our welcome center, the church pews and the church office.

Please don't hesitate to call Tina Williams or Cheryl Appling if you'd like more information.

FOR THE RECORD...

CGRM: (Tues., Dec. 25)	Did not meet	
The Neighborhood (Wed., Dec. 26)	Did not meet	
8:40 Worship	... 28	10:45 Worship	... 138
Total Worship	166	
Sunday School	41	
Sunday Receipts Needed Per Week		\$16,215.67	
Sunday Receipts for 12/30/18		\$4,740.00	
Through Dec. 31: Income	\$757,816.86	Expenses \$802,110.74	

This Sunday:

"A Revealing Epiphany"
2 Timothy 1:3-14
Dr. Mark R. Bender

OPPORTUNITIES

Sunday, January 6, 2019 EPIPHANY / PANTRY SUNDAY

8:40 Worship (Chapel)
9:30 Sunday School
9:45 Journey Through Scripture Bible Study (Parlor)
10:45 Worship (Sanctuary)
12:00 Prime Timers Luncheon (Fellowship Hall)
3:45-5:00 Chancel Ringers (Adults) (Stratten Hall)
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 Movie (Grades K-5) (Rm 402)

Monday, January 7, 2019

7:30-6:00 Children Come First "CCF" (M-F)
9:00 Young Ages School Teacher In-Service
9:00 CCF Music (Rm 220)
6:00-7:00 Stretch Class (Gym)
7:30 Boy Scouts Troop 15 (Fellowship Hall)

Tuesday, January 8, 2019

9:00-12:00 Young Ages School "YAS" (T-F)
9:30 FCC Staff Meeting (Rm 222)
10:00 YAS Music (Rm 220) (Tues. & Wed.)
11:00-1:00 Whirlwind Cluster Ministers' Mtg (Archer City)
11:30-1:30 "On Hold" Caregiver Support Group (2414/2416 Barbados)
2:00 Library Committee (Library)
6:00 Property Ministry Meeting (Rm 310)
6:00 Outreach Ministry Meeting (Library)
6:30 Common Ground Recovery Ministries Support Groups
 Anger Management (Rm 309) Parenting (Rm 305 & 306)
 Rebuilding Your Life (Rm 307)

Wednesday, January 9, 2019

7:00 Elders' Breakfast (Rm 405/Chapel)
9:00 CCF Chapel (Chapel)
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, January 10, 2019

6:00 Through The Bible in a Year Meeting (Rm 310)

Friday, January 11, 2019

7:00 Men's Breakfast & Bible Study (Hwy Café, 2808 Jacksboro Hwy)
9:00 CCF Spanish (Rm 220)

Sunday, January 13, 2019

8:40 Worship (Chapel)
9:30 Sunday School
9:45 Journey Through Scripture Bible Study (Parlor)
10:45 Worship (Sanctuary)
12:00 Fellowship "Volunteer" Luncheon (Fellowship Hall)
3:45 Chancel Ringers (Adults) (Stratten Hall)
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)
5:15 The Gathering (Parlor)
5:45-7:00 Young Disciples (Grades K-5) (Rm 402)

Monday, January 14, 2019

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)
10:30 Christian Women's Fellowship "CWF" Board Meeting (Rm 310)
11:45 CWF Luncheon (Fellowship Hall)
6:00-7:00 Stretch Class (Gym)
7:30 Boy Scouts Troop 15 (Fellowship Hall)

Tuesday, January 15, 2019

9:30 FCC Staff Meeting (Rm 222)
10:00 YAS Music (Rm 220) (Tues. & Wed.)
2:00 Library Committee (Library)
6:00 Education Ministry Meeting (Rm 405)
6:00 Stewardship Ministry Meeting (Rm 310)
6:30 Common Ground Recovery Ministries Support Groups:
 Anger Management (Rm 309) Parenting (Rm 305 & 306)
 Rebuilding Your Life (Rm 307)

7:00 Worship Ministry Meeting (Rm 222)

Wednesday, January 16, 2019

7:00 Elders' Breakfast (Rm 405/Chapel)
9:00 CCF Chapel (Chapel)
2:00-8:30 Vision Team Meeting (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)

Thursday, January 17, 2019

9:00 CWF Group 3 Birthday Breakfast (IHOP-SW Pkwy)
1:30 Knit Wits (Parlor)

Friday, January 18, 2019

9:00 CCF Spanish (Rm 220)

Saturday, January 19, 2019

8:30-12:00 Elder Orientation (Fellowship Hall)

SERVING SUNDAY

ELDERS

1/6: Emily Wilson, Gary Ballard; Cal Edgemon, Presiding
1/13: Ricky Scales, Linda C. Carr; Alice Gordon, Presiding

DIACONATE COMMUNION VISITATION

1/6: Elise Allen, Kim Ballard, Buddy Edgemon
1/13: John Buckley, Susan Buckley, Norma Hill

DIACONATE COMMUNION PREPARATION

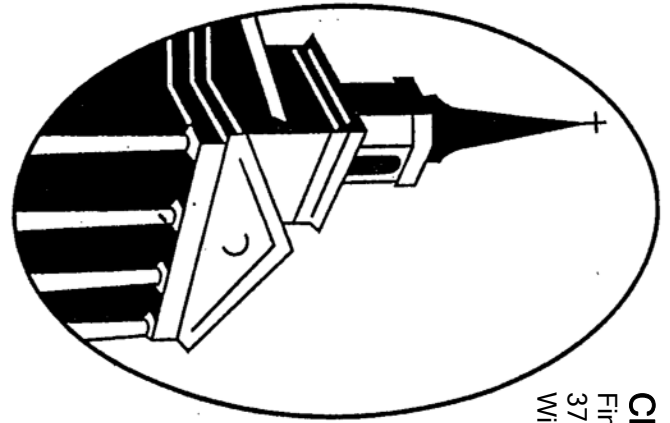
1/6: Elise Allen & Norma Hill
1/13: Kim Ballard & Buddy Edgemon

JANUARY DIACONATE SERVERS

Elise Allen, John & Susan Buckley, Norma Hill, Keith Wineinger, David Wyatt, Kim Ballard, Buddy Edgemon, Linda Gipson, Ann Kable, Curtis Sullivan, Brandi Brannon, Catherine & Hannah Earley, Jim & Karen LaValley, Fred Ridenour.

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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