



Christian Challenger

Vol. 66

February 13, 2019

No. 4

CHRISTIAN MEN'S FELLOWSHIP LADIES' NIGHT DINNER Thursday, February 21, 2019

The Christian Men's Fellowship Ladies' Night Dinner will be Thursday, February 21st, at 6:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Everyone is invited to come and enjoy great entertainment, good food, fellowship, and the special recognition of the "Person of the Year".

Where else than First Christian Church's CMF can you get all this for just \$10.00? Single and unescorted ladies, who are members of FCC, will be

the guests of the Christian Men's Fellowship, but please stop by the church office and pick up a ticket. **Make your reservations in worship this Sunday or by calling the church office, 692-2282.**

As in previous years, this is an adults' only dinner, and childcare will be available. **Please contact the church office by noon on Monday, February 18th, if you need childcare.**

YOUNG AGES PRESCHOOL OPEN HOUSE

Young Ages Preschool would like to cordially invite you to our "Commotion in the Ocean" Open House on Thursday evening, February 28th, from 6:00-7:00 p.m. in the Young Ages classrooms.

Are you looking for a preschool for your child/grandchild? Would you like to see what we do? Please come, look around and celebrate our students' accomplishments. We are very proud of our preschool and we love to show off!

Our spring fundraiser will be a bake sale during the Open House and a raffle to benefit our school which will begin on Thursday, February 14th, with winners to be drawn on Friday, March 1st. You may purchase your raffle tickets (\$1.00 each or 6 tickets for \$5.00) from a YAS student, in the YAS Office or in the Church Office.

The raffle items (this list is also posted around the church, available in the church office and on the Young Ages Preschool Facebook page) include: Two-Refurbished Wooden Children's Kitchen Sets by Rider Woodwork Farmhouse Furniture; 1 dozen Lauri's Sweet Tooth custom cookies; Cut & Color by Jennifer Lane at Peacock Avenue; Cut by Jayce at Peacock Avenue; Basket of hair products from Peacock Avenue; Two Date Night Baskets (Roadhouse Dinners for 2, 2 Movie Passes, and gift cards to either Bahama Bucks or YOJO);

Dinners from Texas Roadhouse; 1 dozen Lolly's Little cookies by Lolly's Cookies; Odd Duck Ethiopia coffee beans & weekly planner from Ruth & Esther; Frozen Yogurt Cake from Menchie's Frozen Yogurt; Two Breakfast items, 2 treats, stuffed cow from Chick-Fil-A; Dallas Cowboy Bob Lilly autographed jersey from Dynasty Breaks; 2018 NFL Trading Cards-Panini Limited from Dynasty Breaks; Two-2 Quickie Ultimate Shine Car Washes from All American Car Wash; Two-2 6" subs with chips and drink from Subway; 2 Pizzas from Rapid Fire Pizza; 1 Pair of earrings from Kelly's Jewels; a Dad's Day Out Basket (Fade It Barber Shop, Keno's Beef Jerky, Buffalo Wild Wings) from All American Insurance; Gift Cards or Certificates from: Ronnie's Burgers, Clarke Eyecare Center, Heff's Burgers, Morath Originals, Thai Orchid, Swanky Chic Boutique, Star Bright Cleaners, Dairy Queen, Spa Bella, Pelicans, Rock Star Salon, Wichita Theater; and a Marksmen Firearms & Outfitters gift card donated by All American Insurance.

2019-20 School Enrollment for Church Members Begins on February 28th.

Registration packets will be available at Open House. For more information, please call Alisa Gardner at the Young Ages office, 692-3640.

Gathering

The Sunday Evening Group

The Gathering meets on Sunday evenings at 5:15 pm in the Parlor 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*. While geared towards young adults (single or married) and parents of young children, all are welcome.

Make Your Mark

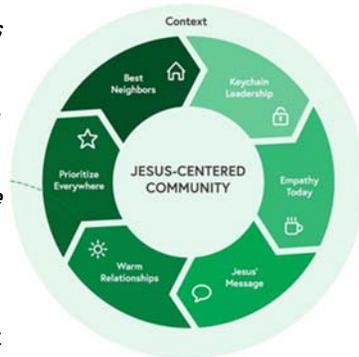
Dr. Mark R. Bender
Senior Minister



Growing Young (Part 4)

The last three *Make Your Mark* columns have highlighted research compiled by the Fuller Youth Institute on churches involving and retaining young people (ages 15-29). In those previous columns, I noted that there are six core commitments common to churches that were “growing young” and described the characteristics of the first two commitments: *unlocking keychain leadership* and *empathizing with today’s young people*.

In this column, we will tackle two more of these core commitments, starting with the third core commitment: *taking Jesus’ message seriously*. The leads on Fuller’s Growing Young research project, Kara Powell, Jake Mulder, and Brad Griffin, commented that they were “struck by how the commitment to take Jesus’ message seriously is both a demonstrated action and an overall spirit or ethos in churches growing young.” This commitment was demonstrated by:



Jesus reign[ing] over poor theology, and his words ring [ing] true for young sojourners hungry for life-giving direction. [By] proclaiming Jesus as the centerpiece of the story of God and seeking to live out his message in everyday relationships, these churches are reclaiming the very heart of the Good News.

Or to say this another way: pursuing Jesus - not just pursuing young people - is at the heart of churches growing young.

Because of cultural influences which have emphasized “right living” over “right believing,” the Fuller Youth Institute research found that churches growing young have made three key shifts in how they describe the message of Jesus:

Shift 1: Less talk about abstract beliefs and more talk about Jesus - Young people are drawn to the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Shift 2: Less tied to formulas and more focused on a redemptive narrative - Rather than specific words or linear steps to obtain salvation, young people use story language to describe God’s work in the world.

Shift 3: Less about heaven later and more about life here and now - Salvation means more to young people than the assurance of heaven later; it also invites us into a new way of life in the present.

Particularly noteworthy about this commitment was the fact that young people like to be challenged. Contrary to popular thinking that young people today want it easy, research interviews illuminated that many of these young people love their church *because* their church inspires them to act.

Developing this core commitment within the church might involve tying each part of scripture into the grand narrative of

God by utilizing the seasons of the church year and developing a scope and sequence which ensures that important parts of the story aren’t inadvertently omitted. Likewise, the elevation of faith education beyond an “elementary school for morals” is key to helping young people see the gospel as less of a list of do’s and don’ts and more of an invitation to participate in a beautiful story of God’s transformative grace. Further, the sharing of testimonies, the power of rituals (i.e. the Lord’s Supper, baptism, life milestones, seasonal events), and embracing young people’s doubts about faith, are all opportunities for proclaiming Christ’s message boldly with this age group.

The fourth core commitment found in churches growing young is *fueling a warm community*. Again, the project leads were surprised by how much of growing young was influenced by whether congregations are warm and accepting. In describing their churches, the young people in this research project repeated words like *welcoming, accepting, belonging, authentic, hospitable, and caring*. Powell, Mulder, and Griffin noted that these variables were greater than any one program. And though group practices like small groups, youth groups, and retreats were named as important, what made them important was that they created space for people to be together and nurture relationships.

Several key insights were revealed by this core commitment. First, ironically, churches might work against warmth by offering a myriad of programs. Churches growing young tended to move away from unnecessary busyness through a deprogramming strategy which elevated relationships by opening up time and space. Second, while churches tend to think young people stay because of beliefs, more often it’s about finding an experience that feels like family. Third, church friendships foster spiritual formation. The Growing Young research found that “as the number of close friends gets closer to five, so does the likelihood that a young person attends church and regularly participates in worship with others, takes time to read and study the Bible, talks openly with other Christians about their faith questions or struggles, serves others in need locally and/or globally, and sees their faith as an influence in their friendships.”

**Church friendships
foster spiritual
formation.**

To strengthening this core commitment within the church, the Fuller Youth Institute found that helping newcomers land smoothly is critical. This means that churches need to assess their approach to guests, thinking specifically about different age groups and life circumstances (e.g. single adults, families with kids, or college students). Likewise, creating a 5:1 ratio of adults and young people builds a flood of support around young people. This doesn’t mean that each young person needs five small group leaders. Instead it might be one teacher, a mentor, someone who commits to pray for them by name, a coach, or the parents of close friends. Ultimately, it’s not about the quantity or quality independently but rather the quantity of quality relationships. A third starting point for churches that want to build greater intergenerational warmth is to pray for one another, developing prayer practices which pray for specific young people and their events.

One thing to remember about these two core commitments (*taking Jesus’ message seriously* and *fueling a warm community*) is that it is often a *really slow* process. Stability, patience, and faithfulness to a local community are the roots that eventually produce these fruits. It takes time and commitment to move past the superficiality of lobby hellos and moralistic obedience to a more intimate community and a more robust faith. In other words, these things must be weaved into the DNA of the church over time.

Mark

FCC MINISTRY NEWS AND CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

FAQ

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Christians are sometimes challenged by questions of life and faith. The ongoing FAQ series on Sunday mornings at 8:40 am and 10:45 am attempts to wrestle with these questions and to hear what the Bible says about these topics:

- February 17 Evolution and/or Creation?
- February 24 Does God bless us with prosperity?
- March 3 When will Jesus return?

Get to Work! at The Neighborhood

The *Get to Work!* series continues each Wednesday at The Neighborhood. Based on the petitions of Howard Thurman's poem, *The Work of Christmas*, each week will feature worship and a hands-on service project. Come join your neighbors in praising God, engaging with scripture, serving the world, and sharing in community each Wednesday, beginning with a meal at 5:30 pm and worship at 6:00 pm.



The **Challenger** is biweekly, with the next publication on February 27! FCC Ministry News is sent by email every Monday.

2019 Special Offerings: Each year, First Christian Church extends a call for over-and-above giving to six Special Offerings. These special offerings go to support the work of the larger church, helping Disciples congregations do more together than they can do on their own. On Sundays, February 17th and 24th, we will receive the **Week of Compassion** Special Offering which supports the relief, refugee, and development work of the church.

Open Flower Dates: If you would like to donate the flowers for the worship service in the Sanctuary, the following dates are open: **February 17 & 24**. Call Sherry Tucker, Flower Coordinator, 696-2490, to donate.

Christian Women's Fellowship Group Meetings will be as follows on Monday, February 18th: **Group 1** will meet at 1:30 pm at Diana Costello's home, 1702 Cedar; and **Group 3** will meet at 2:00 pm in Room 405. On Wednesday, February 20th, **Group 2** will meet at 12:00 noon in Room 405.

February Meetings: will be as follows:
Tuesday, Feb. 19th: **Stewardship** at 6:00 pm, Rm 310
Education at 7:00 pm, Rm 405
Evangelism at 7:00 pm, Rm 222
Tuesday, Feb. 26th: **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, Feb. 18th, & 25th.

Tea at Two on Tuesdays! Bring your favorite tea cup for a gathering for women on Tuesday, February 26th, 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!

Through the Bible in a Year Study: The next "discussion and encouragement gathering" will take place on

Thursday, February 28th, at 6:00 pm in Room 310. A list of the daily readings are available in the church office.

Stretch Class: Join us in the gym every Monday at 6 pm for an hour of stretching. This class is open for everyone....men and women. Lora Vailes guides us through some easy stretches to relieve the stress on our muscles. Cost is \$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.

First Christian Church Library: The church library at FCC is beautiful and spacious, with up-to-date, well-organized books and DVDs. Aside from these superlatives, another descriptive adjective is UNDERUSED. We will be running a few articles in the weeks to come written by church members stating their top reason to use the church library in order to encourage YOU to use our wonderful library. Be on the lookout! Any time the church is open, you may browse and check out books and other materials. You can visit with the librarians by appointment or on Tuesdays at 2:00 pm, if you need assistance.
 Library Committee

Lenten Bible Study: Encounters with Jesus by Timothy Keller – *New York Times*-bestselling author Timothy Keller explores how people are changed by meeting Jesus personally - and how we can be changed encountering him today. Keller knows that Jesus changed the life of every person he met in the Gospels, through powerful experiences and words that led them to unexpected and transforming answers to their big questions. *Encounters with Jesus* focuses on several of these meetings Jesus had with others and shows how the central events in Jesus' life provide ways for us to encounter him again or for the first time.

Join Sheri Sutton as she leads this nine-week study beginning Wednesday, February 27, in Room 310 at 10:30 am. Call the church office at 692-2282 to register. Books are available in the church office. Please read the Introduction before the first session.

Member News:

♥**Hospitalized:** at Presbyterian Manor Health Care is Betty Lyons; at the Gables is Ruth Beyer. Released and back home are Jo Ella Rice, Sharon Roach, Ted Smith.

♥Our sympathies are extended to Jerry Caraway & Family on learning of the death of his father, Jimmie Caraway, on January 27th in Azle TX.

First Time Guests! We are excited to report that the following persons visited for the first time on Sunday, February 10th: Maria Dykes.

FOR THE RECORD . . .	
CGRM: (Tues., Feb. 5)	30
The Neighborhood (Wed., Feb. 6)	23
8:40 Worship . . . 33	10:45 Worship . . . 202
Total Worship	258
Sunday School	83
Sunday Receipts Needed Per Week	\$17,867.62
Sunday Receipts for 2/10/19	\$8,641.00
Through Feb. 11: Income \$113,627.10	Expenses \$73,132.60

This Sunday:

"What Happened in the Beginning?"
 Psalm 8
 Dr. Mark Bender

2018 First Christian Church Giving & Endowment Update

Within the ministry structure of First Christian Church, the spiritual development of Christian stewardship and the direction of the church's finances are the responsibility of the Stewardship Ministry. As one of the diligent stewards of this congregation, we wanted to further inform you about the First Christian Church Endowment Fund and how it supports the ministries of the church.

Most are familiar with the two primary ways that stewards engage in the congregation's life through their giving: the annual stewardship campaign for the operating budget and occasional capital fund campaigns. The dollars you regularly give toward the Operating Budget enable the various ministries of the church and the operational infrastructure that makes ministry possible. Gifts given through periodic Capital Fund Drives support special capital projects and facilitate major repairs and maintenance needs not covered by the annual operating budget.

The third and perhaps less familiar way stewards give to support the ministries of First Christian Church is through the FCC Endowment Fund. This permanent fund was established several years ago as a means for individuals to leave all, or a portion, of their estates to our church, allowing the interest earned on the proceeds of those estates to be used for various church needs.

As part of the careful stewardship of this endowment, a committee was appointed to develop the bylaws for the administration of the FCC Endowment Fund. These bylaws entrust the day-to-day governance of the Fund to three Trustees elected by the Congregation. These Endowment Trustees oversee the prudent investment of the Endowment funds in various financial markets, allowing the Fund the best opportunities for growth. (Just for clarification, the Endowment Trustees should not be confused with the Church Trustees who govern the church property.)

The Endowment Fund bylaws also allow the distribution of funds with particular long-term goals. When the principal balance of the Fund's investment account reached and exceeded \$300,000, the Trustees were authorized to allocate up to 2.5% of the balance to fund special programs of the church. Further, when the principal balance of the Fund's investment account reaches \$500,000, the trustees can allocate up to 5% of the balance towards special church programs. As of December 31, 2018, the investment account value equals **\$348,457.69**.

The amount authorized by the Trustees for distribution in **2019 is \$9,656.91**, based on the investment account value as of September 30, 2018. To facilitate the distribution of these funds, the Endowment Fund Trustees created a "grant request" system for the funding of special projects by the different ministries of the church. In the last two years, these projects have included Evangelism's television and Facebook advertising campaigns, an Auxano transition planning workshop, a contribution to the new choir robes, Youth Ministry car show banners, off-site VBS expenses, a CMF Mustang Meal, funding for the College Singers (MSU Choir students), and staff development conferences.

Finally, we hope that all our church families will remember our church in their estate plan...as many other families have done in the past allowing us to benefit today...and don't hesitate to contact any of us with questions.

David Gately
Trustee

Eddie C Tucker
Trustee

Vicki Kunkle
Trustee

Previous FCC Endowment Trustees are -

Frank Tate
Harry Gordon
Julia Ward

Glenn Tole
Craig Reynolds
Nick Gipson

Richard Phillips
Kenn Hill

OPPORTUNITIES

Sunday, February 17, 2019

WEEK OF COMPASSION SPECIAL OFFERING

8:40 Worship (Chapel)

9:30 Sunday School

9:30 Pastor's Class (Rm 309)

9:45 Journey Through Scripture Bible Study (Parlor)

10:45 Worship (Sanctuary)

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)

5:15-7:00 The Gathering (Adults) (Parlor)

5:45-7:00 Young Disciples (Grades K-5) (Rm 402)

Monday, February 18, 2019

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

9:00-12:00 Young Ages School "YAS" (M-F)

1:30 CWF Group 1 (Diana Costello's home, 1702 Cedar)

2:00 CWF Group 3 (Rm 405)

4:00-8:00 CCF Staff Training (Rm 310)

6:00-7:00 Stretch Class (Gym)

7:30 Boy Scouts Troop 15 (Fellowship Hall)

Tuesday, February 19, 2019

9:30 FCC Staff Meeting (Rm 222)

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

2:00 Library Committee (Library)

6:00 Stewardship Ministry Meeting (Rm 310)

6:30 Common Ground Recovery Ministries Support Groups

7:00 Education Ministry Meeting (Rm 405)

7:00 Evangelism Ministry Meeting (Rm 222)

Wednesday, February 20, 2019

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

9:00 CCF Chapel (Chapel)

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, February 21, 2019

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

1:30 Knit Wits (Parlor)

6:30 CMF Ladies Night Dinner (Fellowship Hall)

Friday, February 22, 2019

9:00 CCF Spanish (Rm 220)

Sunday, February 24, 2019

WEEK OF COMPASSION SPECIAL OFFERING

8:40 Worship (Chapel)

9:30 Sunday School

9:30 Pastor's Class (Rm 309)

9:45 Journey Through Scripture Bible Study (Parlor)

10:45 Worship (Sanctuary)

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)

5:15-7:00 The Gathering (Adults) (Parlor)

5:45-7:00 Young Disciples (Grades K-5) (Rm 402)

Monday, February 25, 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)

6:00-7:00 Stretch Class (Gym)

7:30 Boy Scouts Troop 15 (Fellowship Hall)

Tuesday, February 26, 2019

9:30 FCC Staff Meeting (Rm 222)

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

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

Wednesday, February 27, 2019

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

9:00 CCF Chapel (Chapel)

10:30 Sheri Sutton Lenten Study (Rm 310)

5:30 Neighborhood & MSU Meals (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, February 28, 2019

6:00 YAS Open House & Bake Sale (Classrooms & Hallway)

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

Friday, March 1, 2019

9:00 CCF Spanish (Rm 220)

SERVING SUNDAY

ELDERS

2/17: Cal Edgemon, Gary Ballard; Emily Wilson, Presiding

2/24: Alice Gordon, Linda C. Carr; Ricky Scales, Presiding

DIACONATE COMMUNION VISITATION

2/17: Debi Ballard, Larry Ballard, Alan Freeman

2/24: Liz Thomas, Emily Thomas, Teresa Archambo

DIACONATE COMMUNION PREPARATION

2/17: Fred Gentry & James Poole

2/24: Emily & Liz Thomas

FEBRUARY DIACONATE SERVERS

Karen & Terry Burross, Sherry Martin, Chris Showalter, Debi & Larry Ballard, Alan Freeman, Lynette Gill, Kris Gossom, Liz & Emily Thomas, Teresa Archambo, Shirley Craft, Fred Gentry, Melody Jennings, Margaret Phillips, James Poole, 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

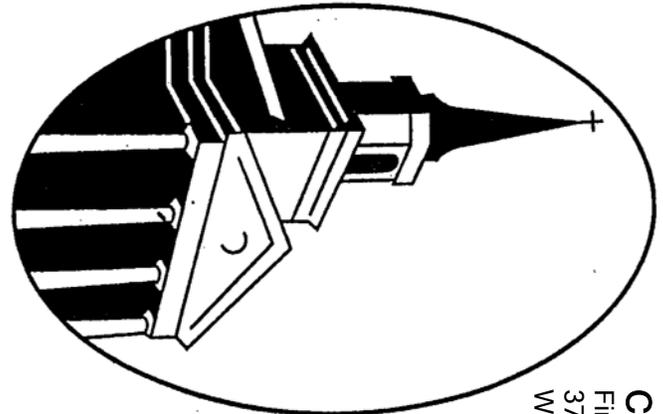
Heather Dickerson, Director of Children Come First 687-2231

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



CHRISTIAN CHALLENGER
First Christian Church
3701 Taft Boulevard
Wichita Falls, Texas 76308

THE CHRISTIAN CHALLENGER
Pub. No. (USPS 559-820) Published
biweekly by First Christian Church, 3701
Taft Blvd., Wichita Falls TX 76308-2315.
Periodical postage paid at Wichita Falls
TX. - POSTMASTER: Send Address
Changes to Christian Challenger, 3701
Taft Blvd., Wichita Falls, TX 76308-2315.