



# Christian Challenger

Vol. 66

April 10, 2019

No. 8

## Holy Week 2019



### Palm Sunday - April 14

It is tradition to start our Palm Sunday worship service with a palm processional led by the children of the church. The children walk down the center aisle waving palm branches, reminding us of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. All children are invited to participate in the procession during the 10:45 worship service. We will meet in the Narthex at 10:30.

Following worship, everyone is invited to a Fellowship Luncheon in the Fellowship Hall followed by an Easter Egg Hunt on the church grounds. The Christian Men's Fellowship will be cooking the meal: a hot dog feast. Cost will be by donation.

### Maundy Thursday

Join us on Thursday, April 18, for our Maundy Thursday Service. A light meal will be served at 6:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall followed by worship at 6:30 pm.

### 24-Hour Prayer Vigil

As a church family, we will form a "prayer chain" from 8 pm Thursday to 8 pm Friday. Pray from home or come to the Chapel to pray.

### Easter Sunday Worship Service Times

**Sunrise Worship** at 7:00 am in the Garden of the Cross

**Chapel Worship** at 8:40 am in the Chapel

**Sanctuary Worship** at 10:45 am in the Sanctuary

Make your reservations for the meals or sign up for the prayer vigil by calling the church office, 692-2282.



### Greetings FCC Family!

This past Saturday I had the honor of being ordained to ministry in the Christian Church Disciples of Christ. I wanted to offer my heartfelt thanks to everyone who made the arduous drive down to Weatherford in a thunderstorm to be part of my special day. I was absolutely moved that so many of you came to celebrate this important ministerial milestone with me. I would like to say a special thank you to Dr. Bender for presenting one of the gifts of ministry on behalf of First Christian Church Wichita Falls. I am also especially grateful to the youth who served communion at my service: JJ Johnson, Abby Bender, Hannah Earley, Emily Thomas, Tyler Thomas, and Davidson Cook.

My Ordination was made extra special by a gift I received from Catherine Earley and the youth, a stole with all of their handprints on it to carry their blessings with me in ministry. Whether you were one of those in attendance or not, know that I also thank each and every member of the FCC family. Each one of you has played an important role in making this church an absolutely wonderful place to do ministry. I have been stunned by the kindness and support of this congregation throughout my time here. First Christian Church Wichita Falls is indeed a very special place in God's kingdom. I am more than excited to see what the future holds as we continue to work together in ministry, and it is truly an honor to call this church home. Peace,

Joshua deSteiguer

# Make Your Mark

Dr. Mark R. Bender  
Senior Minister



## Why Holy Week?

*The Christian faith is empty at its heart if congregations habitually skip over Good Friday as if it had not occurred.*  
Fleming Rutledge, *The Crucifixion* (Eerdmans, 2015)

We are just a few days away from one of the most intensive weeks of the church year. It's intensive in terms of its activity. It's intensive in terms of its content. It's intensive in terms of its detailed history. It's intensive in terms of what it means to you and to me. This intensive week is Holy Week.

During Holy Week, we are reminded of the richness of meaning in the Paschal Mystery - the church's "fancy" term for talking about the process of dying and rising, death and new life, specifically in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. While all the seasons of the church year speak to this truth, it takes on particular power and significance during Holy Week. In the celebration of Palm Sunday, in the climatic last three days of the week (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday), and finally in the burst of praise and resurrection joy of Easter, we remember and rouse in us a sense of God's ever-present saving power through the cross and resurrection.

The observance of Holy Week as a historical sequence of events was first systematically dramatized in fourth-century Jerusalem. Originally, only Good Friday and Holy Saturday were observed and the church often concentrated its commemoration in one great Passover feast. However, by the fourth century, the practice of separating the various events and commemorating them on the days of the week they occurred became common place. This combination of observances was given the name "Holy Week" by St. Athanasius, the bishop of Alexandria, and St. Epiphanius of Constantia.

Given the busyness of our lives, there is a tendency to overlook what takes place between Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. And if we skip from the celebration of Palm Sunday to the celebration of Easter, we miss something. After all, Holy Week is not an occasion for mere sentimental remembrance of past events. It is, as Hoyt Hickman and other worship scholars suggest, *a way of participating in these saving events through a unified sequence of actions, scripture, and common prayer.* It is during these observances that we encounter Christ who comes to deliver all of humanity from bondage and death - a reality made possible through his suffering and death for our redemption, and by his triumphal rising. Without the encounter, we run the risk of that "empty faith" that Fleming Rutledge warned about in the quote at the top of this column.

That's why I'm encouraging you to make the most of Holy Week with your prayers and presence. This week kicks off with **Palm Sunday** (April 14), which will feature a celebratory

procession remembering Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Worship begins with children carrying palms down the center aisle, creating a palpable excitement while foreshadowing the events to come. Come worship on Palm Sunday at 8:40 am in the Chapel or at 10:45 am in the Sanctuary.

Then join in an interactive reflection on the final days of Christ's earthly life at the **Maundy Thursday** worship service on April 18. This service begins at 6:00 pm with a simple meal served in the Fellowship Hall, a reminder of how the disciples gathered with Jesus on the night he was betrayed. Around 6:30 pm, following the celebration of the Lord's Supper, participants will walk Jesus' path to the cross, remembering Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, his betrayal by Judas, his treatment by the Roman Guards, and, finally, his crucifixion. Through song and Scripture, we will remember the darkest moment of Christian history when Jesus died on the cross.

Beginning at the conclusion of this service, we will "watch and pray" as Jesus' disciples were asked to do. This **24 hour prayer vigil** provides a way for you to prepare your hearts for Easter through guided prayer and meditation. You will have the opportunity to pray, either here in the Chapel or from your house, for each FCC family and our community as we form a "prayer chain." 30 minute intervals for prayer begin at 8:00 pm on April 14 and conclude at 8:00 pm on April 15. I encourage you to find a time for earnest prayer and sobering reflection on what Jesus has done for each of us.

Finally, we gather on the source and summit of the entire

Christian year: **Easter Sunday** (April 21). On this day, we remember God's ultimate saving deed as we celebrate Jesus conquering sin and death. This day begins with **Sunrise Worship** at 7:00 am. Just as the women came to the tomb at early dawn on the first day of

the week (Luke 24:1-12), this service in the Garden of the Cross at the dawning of the day celebrates that Christ is risen! Then, at 8:40 am, our **Chapel Worship** service celebrates Christ's resurrection through traditional hymns, Holy Communion, and a message of hope. Finally, the Vigil begun at the close of the Maundy Thursday Worship Service ends as we declare, "Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again!" at the 10:45 am **Sanctuary Worship** service. Together, we will proclaim the transforming power of Christ's resurrection with the celebration of baptisms, beautiful music by the Chancel Choir and brass ensemble, traditional hymns, Holy Communion, a message of hope, and the powerful exclamation of Handel's *Hallelujah!*

While Holy Week provides a pattern of narrating and enacting the sweep of events over several days, we should think of each observance not as an independent entity but as a continually unfolding unified drama of our salvation. And it's not just the story of our salvation. It's also the story of salvation for our family members, our friends, our neighbors, our co-workers, our bridge partners, our golfing buddies, our classmates, and the others in our networks of kinship and friendship.

So don't keep this week to yourself. Invite someone (or multiple "someones") to join you in this powerful, intensive week of experiencing the power of God for all of us.

Mark



# FCC MINISTRY NEWS AND CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS



## 10<sup>th</sup> Annual "Cruisin' for Christ" Kick Off Car Show

Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup>  
East Parking Lot

Come by to see the cars in over 20 categories! Registration is from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Prizes are awarded at 3:00 pm. Registration fee is \$20. There will be a concession stand and door prizes. Bring non-perishable food items for the MSU Food Pantry and receive two door prize tickets per donation. All proceeds benefit FCC Youth Ministry.

The **Challenger** is biweekly, with the next publication on April 24! FCC Ministry News is sent by email every Monday.

**Through the Bible in a Year Study:** The next "discussion and encouragement gathering" will take place on Thursday, April 11<sup>th</sup>, and again on Thursday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, at 6:00 pm in Room 310.

**Men's Breakfast & Bible Study!** Bring a friend and attend the FCC Men's Breakfast & Bible Study on Friday morning, April 12<sup>th</sup>, from 7:00-8:00 am, at the Hwy Café, 2808 Jacksboro Hwy.

**Christian Women's Fellowship Group Meetings** will be as follows on Monday, April 15<sup>th</sup>: **Group 1** will meet at 1:30 pm at Norma Hill's home, 2004 Granada; and **Group 3** will meet at 2:00 pm in Room 405. On Wednesday, April 17<sup>th</sup>, **Group 2** will meet at 12:00 noon in Room 405.

**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.

**April Meetings:** will be as follows:  
Tuesday, April 16<sup>th</sup>: **Stewardship** at 6:00 pm, Rm 310  
**Outreach** at 6:00 pm, Library  
Tuesday, April 23<sup>rd</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, April 15<sup>th</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Easter Holiday:** The Church Building, Offices and all Programs will be closed on Monday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, for the Easter holiday.

**Tea at Two on Tuesdays!** Bring your favorite tea cup for a gathering for women on Tuesday, April 30<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 Debbie Carlton; at Windmill Rehab is Camille Brookshire; at Presbyterian Manor Health Care is Betty Lyons. Released and back home is Jude Berry, Gretchen Bridgman, Jim Hay.

♥Our sympathies are extended to Mistie Seguire on learning of the death of her grandfather, Jim Evans, on March 26<sup>th</sup>.

♥Congratulations to Addison & Darion Roberts on the birth of their daughter, Noa Lauren Roberts, on March 31<sup>st</sup>. Proud great-grandmother is Peggy Fitts.

**First Time Guests!** We are excited to report that the following person visited for the first time on Sunday, April 7<sup>th</sup>: Chase Pontius.

**Library News:** Evelyn Underhill, poet, novelist, spiritual author, and theologian said: "Spiritual reading is, or at least can be, second only to prayer as a developer and support of the inner life."

Over the next several months, the library is going to share with you thoughts and words of several church members, staff and others. They have been asked to share their thoughts on the top reasons why we should use our church library. We hope this will encourage you to use our wonderful library.

Reason #1 "We are Disciples of Christ. The word "disciple" means student or learner. This means that we are always learning. It is on our DNA to be inquisitive; to think deeply; to have a faith that seeks understanding. This is why a church library is so important to our particular brand of Christianity. The resources we find there help us to learn more about the God we know in Jesus Christ and how that knowledge applies to our daily lives. That's why I often use the library as a source for sermon preparation or for teaching materials. It is rich in resources that enhance my own thinking...and you will find it can do the same for you."

Dr. Mark Bender

**SAVE THE DATE:**  
Rolling River Rampage VBS  
July 15-19, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm  
Ages 4 years old - 5<sup>th</sup> Grade



### FOR THE RECORD . . .

CGRM: (Tues., April 2) . . . . .	33	
The Neighborhood (Wed., Apr. 3) . . . . .	27	
8:40 Worship . . . . .	38	10:45 Worship . . . . . 185
Total Worship . . . . .	250	
Sunday School . . . . .	93	
Sunday Receipts Needed Per Week		\$17,867.62
Sunday Receipts for 4/7/19		\$18,223.00
Through Apr. 8: Income \$263,122.19		Expenses \$234,558.90

## This Sunday:

"Look Around at Everything"  
Mark 11:1-11  
Dr. Mark Bender

## OPPORTUNITIES

Sunday, April 14, 2019 PALM SUNDAY

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)  
12:00 Fellowship Luncheon & Easter Egg Hunt (Fellowship Hall / Grounds)  
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)  
5:45-7:00 Young Disciples (Grades K-5) (Rm 402)

Monday, April 15, 2019

7:30-6:00 Children Come First "CCF" (M-Th)  
9:00-12:00 Young Ages School "YAS" (M-Th)  
9:00 CCF Music (Rm 220)  
10:00 YAS Music (Rm 220) (Mon. & Tues.)  
1:30 CWF Group 1 (Norma Hill's home, 2014 Granada)  
2:00 CWF Group 3 (Rm 405)  
5:00-8:00 CCF Staff Training (Rm 310)  
6:00 Stretch Class (Gym)  
7:30 Boy Scouts Troop 15 (Fellowship Hall)

Tuesday, April 16, 2019

9:30 FCC Staff Meeting (Rm 222)  
2:00 Library Committee (Library)  
6:00 Stewardship Ministry Meeting (Rm 310)  
6:00 Outreach Ministry Meeting (Library)  
6:30 Common Ground Recovery Ministries Support Groups

Wednesday, April 17, 2019

YAS Easter Parties (Classrooms)  
7:00 Elders' Breakfast (Rm 405/Chapel)  
7:30-12:00 CCF Graduation Pictures (Parlor)  
9:00 CCF Chapel (Chapel)  
10:30 Sheri Sutton Lenten Study (Rm 310)  
12:00 CWF Group 2 (Rm 405)  
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, April 18, 2019 MAUNDY THURSDAY

CCF / YAS Easter Parties (Classrooms)  
9:00 CWF Group 3 Birthday Breakfast (IHOP on SW Pkwy)  
1:30 Knit Wits (Parlor)  
6:00 Maundy Thursday Meal & Worship (Fellowship Hall)  
8:00 The 24-Hour Prayer Vigil Begins (Chapel)

Friday, April 19, 2019 GOOD FRIDAY

CCF & YAS Closed  
8:00pm The 24-Hour Prayer Vigil Ends (Chapel)

Sunday, April 21, 2019 EASTER SUNDAY

7:00 Sunrise Worship Service (Garden of the Cross)  
8:40 Worship (Chapel)  
9:30 Sunday School  
9:30 Choir Breakfast (Fellowship Hall)  
NO Journey Through Scripture Bible Study (Parlor)  
10:45 Worship (Sanctuary)  
NO Sunday Evening Activities

Monday, April 22, 2019

Church Building, Offices & All Programs Closed for Easter

Tuesday, April 23, 2019

7:30-6:00 Children Come First "CCF" (Tu-F)  
9:00-12:00 Young Ages School "YAS" (Tu-F)  
9:30 FCC Staff Meeting (Rm 222)  
10:00 YAS Music (Rm 220) (Tues. & Wed.)  
2:00 Library Committee (Library)  
6:00 Executive Council Meeting (Room 310)  
6:30 Common Ground Recovery Ministries Support Groups

Wednesday, April 24, 2019

7:00 Elders' Breakfast (Rm 405/Chapel)  
9:00 CCF Chapel (Chapel)  
10:30 Sheri Sutton Lenten 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)

Thursday, April 25, 2019

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

Friday, April 26, 2019

9:00 CCF Spanish (Rm 220)

## SERVING SUNDAY ELDERS

4/14: Robert Hernandez, Woody Gossom; Linda Cook, Presiding

4/18: Dwight Ross III, Rick Appling; Sherry Tucker, Presiding

4/21: Debbi Schmidt, David Collins; Andy Wilson, Presiding

### **DIACONATE COMMUNION VISITATION**

4/14: Fred Ridenour, Jim LaValley, Karen LaValley

4/21: Elise Allen, John Buckley, Susan Buckley

### **DIACONATE COMMUNION PREPARATION**

4/14: Karen & Jim LaValley

4/21: Keith Wineinger & David Wyatt

### **APRIL DIACONATE SERVERS**

Jim LaValley, Captain

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

### **THE CHURCH STAFF...**

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

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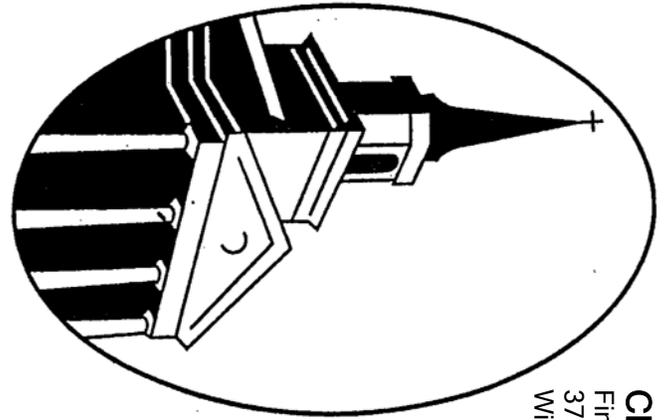
Heather Dickerson, Director of Children Come First 687-2231

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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