



Christian Challenger

Vol. 66

December 4, 2019

No. 25

Advent 2019

Magnificent Worship Series

Sundays at 8:40 and 10:45 am

- December 8 *Great and Holy Things*
December 15 *With His Strong Arm*
December 22 *In Remembrance of His Mercy*



Magnificat is not a word we hear every day. Yet, it may be the key to spiritual growth during the Advent and Christmas season. *Magnificat* is Latin for “my soul magnifies the Lord” and this Advent season, come hear how Mary’s hymn of joy enlarges and enhances our celebration of Jesus’ birth.

Canticle of Joy - Chancel Choir Cantata

December 8 - 10:45 am

Step fully into the Advent season as the Chancel Choir offers *Canticle of Joy* - an extraordinary incorporation of beloved carols in new settings and the story of the Promised One.

Christmas Fellowship Dinner and Children’s Pageant

December 18 - 6:00 pm

Bring the whole family for a delicious potluck meal, beautiful sounds of the season from the Chancel Ringers, and a retelling of the Christmas story through carols and tableaux. **Make your reservations in worship or by calling the church office, 692-2282.**

Children preschool age and older are invited to help tell the story. [Contact Claire Baer (claire@firstchristianwf.com) for rehearsal details.]

Christmas Eve Services

The Very First Christmas - Children and Family Service - 3:00 pm

Children are invited to engage with the story of Jesus’ birth as shepherds, angels, wise men, and other key figures. Enhancing the story they tell is the presence of live animals, the singing of familiar Christmas carols, and the celebration of Communion.

Traditional Services - 6:00 pm and 11:00 pm

These identical services will feature the 50th annual performance of Herbert Burtis’ *Christmas Eve*, communion, and the traditional candlelight singing of *Silent Night*.

The Neighborhood: *Prepare Ye The Way*

Dinner at 5:30 pm | Worship at 6:00 pm
December 11

A large portion of the Bible focuses on the visions of what the Messiah would come to set right. Join *The Neighborhood* for an engagement with the prophets who foretold Jesus’ coming.



Our Socks / Hats / Gloves / Pajamas Tree

For the 24th year the Sock Tree for Fain Elementary School students is up in the church office. This year we will be decorating it with colorful socks, hats, gloves and **kids pajamas!**

The Outreach Ministry overwhelmingly decided to add pajamas to our Fain Sock Tree collection this year. The Fain counselor listed pajamas as a need they have year-round, so Outreach decided the sock tree would be a great time for anyone who wants to help with that can. The pj’s can be for boys or girls, size 6 to about 16 (probably smaller sizes will be more needed).



Make Your Mark

Dr. Mark R. Bender
Senior Minister



The Tension of Advent

Yesterday, a ministry colleague posted on his Facebook page:

Sitting in the dark...at the end of a normal ministry day.

Today we did a funeral well. Visitors even asked if our staff would do theirs when the time came.

We fought technology and lost. We seem to be doing a lot of that. It wastes time we do not have.

One in the flock got a good medical report. Another is still waiting. Several others are healing.

Two ministries made a subtle new difference. Many noticed they did.

Rooms are filling up with gifts. Children will be surprised. Local school donated over a thousand pounds of food products to the pantry. The regular delivery truck was late. The volunteers stayed. The pantry will open at noon tomorrow. The line will form at 7 am. Folks will stand in line for 5 hours.

Musicians are readying for their day Sunday. Actors prepping for the next week. Props and people trying not to get in each other's way.

Search committees, nominating committees, and boards, oh my. All this week.

Another day of ministry.

It's Advent and I'm trying hard to find some waiting time.

You should, too. If you do be sure you tell me how.

I don't share this to elicit sympathy for ministers and church leaders. Yes, this is a busy season for us. But, this is a busy season for everyone. And, every one of us could make a long list of our highs and lows, our successes and stresses, and the ordinary and extraordinary additions to our calendars.

Every year, you and I tell ourselves that we aren't going to do it again. We resolve to plan ahead - to start shopping earlier. We begin marshaling the willpower to say no to too many extra engagements. We purposely decide this will be the year we approach this season with hope, peace, joy, and love. But then, Thanksgiving happens and the whirlwind of the season unfolds and overwhelms us. All those plans we made to make this year different go out the window.

Soon, we find ourselves waiting - the thing we least want to do in this season. We have to wait in line at the supermarket to pick up cookies for the Christmas party. We have to wait on the package, hoping for delivery before Christmas. We have to wait to wait for our loved ones to arrive. All we do is anxiously wait...without realizing that the tension we feel could be a moment for spiritual awakening.

Advent is designed to be a time of waiting:

In Advent we expectantly wait for the One who has already come. We anticipate the promised judgment of God's new world, yet we praise God who raised the "righteous branch" to rule with justice and righteousness. We hope for the restoration of the afflicted, the tormented, and the grieving, yet we delight that healing has come with Christ. We long for the beating of swords into plowshares, yet we rejoice that the Prince of Peace has appeared. We yearn for the barren deserts of our inner cities to flourish, yet we laud the desert Rose that has bloomed. We dream of the land where lions and lambs live in harmony, yet we acclaim the child born to lead us into the promised land. In Advent, we are living between the first and second coming of the Lord. (Liturgical Year, Resource 7, 1992)



The tensions we experience in this season - plans versus reality; willpower versus weakness; desires versus defeat - these things can actually shape our celebration of Christmas in a positive way. The tensions we feel are symbolic of the tension that Advent highlights - the tension between "Our Lord has come" and "Come, our Lord!" We live between *marana tha*, our prayer for the future coming of the Lord, and *maran atha*, our belief that the Lord has come as God's ultimate act in history. Placing ourselves in the tension between memory and hope, past and future, can actually enrich the joy we experience when Christmas arrives.

So, when you find yourself overwhelmed, overcommitted, waiting anxiously, and in a state of mind not characterized by hope, peace, joy, and love, celebrate the tension that is arising within you...and use it as preparation for rejoicing that God's future, promised in Jesus Christ, arrived at Christmas!

Mark

FCC MINISTRY NEWS AND CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

The **Challenger** is biweekly, with the next publication on Dec. 18! FCC Ministry News is sent by email every Monday.

Pickleball! Join us on Sunday afternoon in the gym to play Pickleball. No experience required, on the court instruction, and loads of fun. We play from 2-4, so come for the whole time, or half the time and find out what the BIG "dill" is!

Through the Bible in a Year Study: will meet on Thursdays, December 5th & 19th at 6:00 pm in Room 310.

College Lunch Bunch will meet this Friday, December 6th, at noon in the MSU Student Center Food Court!

Christian Women's Fellowship

The **December CWF Luncheon** will be Monday, December 9th, at 11:45 am in the Fellowship Hall. The program will be the interviews of Marilyn Vaughn & Joan Stodghill by Cheryl Smiley, and Sam Maynor by Catherine Earley. The devotional will be given by Alice Gordon. 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, December 16th: **Group 1** will meet at 1:30 pm at Patt Giddings' home, 2806 Mill Valley; **Group 2** will meet at 5:30 pm at Applebee's on Kemp; **Group 3** will meet at 1:00 pm in the Parlor.

Our support group for caregivers of all kinds, **On Hold**, will meet on Tuesday, December 10th, 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.

December Meetings: will be as follows:
Tuesday, Dec. 10th: **Membership** at 6:00 pm, Parlor
Property at 6:00 pm, Rm 310
Outreach at 6:00 pm, Library
Worship at 7:00 pm, Rm 222

Tuesday, Dec. 17th: **Stewardship** at 6:00 pm, Rm 310

If you will need childcare, please RSVP to the church office, 692-2282, by noon on Mondays, Dec. 9th & 16th.

Men's Breakfast & Bible Study! Bring a friend and attend the FCC Men's Breakfast & Bible Study on Friday morning, December 13th, from 7:00-8:00 am, at Hwy Café, 2808 Jacksboro Hwy.

Member News:

♥**Hospitalized:** at Encompass Rehab is Gretchen Bridgman. Released and back home is Konnor Burross.

♥Our condolences are extended to the family and friends of Fran Haines. Fran passed away on November 10th. No services will be held at her request.

♥Our sympathies are extended to the family and friends of Anita Mills. Anita passed away on November 21st. Services were held on November 26th in the Sanctuary.

♥Congratulations to Rachel & Tye McLaughlin on the birth of their daughter, Sophie Corrine McLaughlin, on November 13th. Sophie Corrine weighed 7 lbs 5 ozs and was 19 1/2" long. Proud grandparents are Teresa & Larry Archambo and Ricky & Margaret Scales.

New on the Library Shelves. . .

New Children's Books in the Church Library

1. The Right Word: Roget and His Thesaurus - Jen Bryant
2. The Legend of the Indian Paintbrush - Tomie DePaola
3. First Ladies: Women Who Called The White House Home - Beatrice Gormley
4. Stetson Street Dog of Park City - Jeannine Heil
5. Make Way for Ducklings - Robert McCloskey
6. The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe, based on the original book - C.S. Lewis
7. The Graphic Alphabet - David Pelletier



Stewardship Campaign Update for 2020

As of Monday, December 2nd, we have received 119 estimates of giving totaling \$716,536....with an average pledge of \$6,021.31.

If you haven't had the opportunity to make your estimate of giving, we invite you to join us in our commitment for 2020 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 in 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., Nov. 26)	25
The Neighborhood (Wed., Nov..27)	Did not meet
Worship (Dec. 1): 8:40am.	32
10:45am.	169
Total Worship.	201
Sunday School	72
Sunday Receipts Needed Per Week	\$17,867.62
Sunday Receipts for 12/1/19	\$5,988.00
Through Nov. 18: Income \$788,032.69	Expenses \$817,195.31

This Sunday:

8:40: "Great and Holy Things" - Luke 1:49-50
 Dr. Mark Bender
 10:45: Choir Cantata: "Canticle of Joy"

OPPORTUNITIES

Sunday, December 8, 2019

8:40 Worship (Chapel)
9:30 Sunday School
9:45 Journey Through Scripture (Parlor)
10:45 Worship & Choir Cantata (Sanctuary)
2:00-4:00 Pickleball (Gym)
2:00 Young Disciples & Youth going to see "Elf" (Wichita Theater)
3:45 Chancel Ringers (High School-Adults) (Stratten Hall)
5:00-5:45 Grow in Grace Choir (Grades K-5)
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, December 9, 2019

7:30-6:00 Children Come First "CCF" (M-F)
9:00-12:00 Young Ages School "YAS" (M-F)
9:00 CCF Chapel (Chapel)
10:30 Christian Women's Fellowship "CWF" Board Meeting (Rm 310)
11:45 CWF Luncheon (Fellowship Hall)
7:30 Boy Scouts Troop 15 (Fellowship Hall)

Tuesday, December 10, 2019

9:15 YAS to Fantasy of Lights (Tues. & Wed.)
9:30 FCC Staff Meeting (Rm 222)
11:30-1:30 "On Hold" Caregivers Support Group (2414/2416 Barbados)
2:00 Library Committee (Library)
6:00 Membership Ministry Meeting (Parlor)
6:00 Property Ministry Meeting (Rm 310)
6:00 Outreach Ministry Meeting (Library)
6:30 Common Ground Recovery Ministries Support Groups
7:00 Worship Ministry Meeting (Rm 222)

Wednesday, December 11, 2019

7:00 Elders' Breakfast (Rm 405/Chapel)
9:00 CCF Spanish (Rm 220)
10:30 Sheri Sutton's Advent Bible Study (Rm 310)
12:00-2:00 YAS Staff Christmas Party
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)
7:00-8:30 Chancel Choir (Stratten Hall)

Thursday, December 12, 2019

7:00 FCC Staff Christmas Party

Friday, December 13, 2019

7:00 Men's Breakfast & Bible Study (Hwy Café, 2808 Jacksboro Hwy)
2:45-3:15 CCF Christmas Parties (Classrooms)
6:30 CCF Staff Christmas Party

Sunday, December 15, 2019

8:40 Worship (Chapel)
9:30 Sunday School
9:45 Journey Through Scripture (Parlor)
10:45 Worship (Sanctuary)
2:00-4:00 Pickleball (Gym)
3:45 Chancel Ringers (High School-Adults) (Stratten Hall)
5:00-5:45 Grow in Grace Choir (Grades K-5)
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, December 16, 2019

7:30-6:00 Children Come First "CCF" (M-F)
9:00-12:00 Young Ages School "YAS" (M-F)
9:00 CCF Chapel (Chapel)
1:00 CWF Group 3 (Parlor)
1:30 CWF Group 1 (2806 Mill Valley)
5:30 CWF Group 2 (Applebee's)
7:30 Boy Scouts Troop 15 (Fellowship Hall)

Tuesday, December 17, 2019

9:30 FCC Staff Meeting (Rm 222)
10:00 YAS Music (Tues. & Wed.) (Rm 220)
2:00 Library Committee (Library)
6:00 Stewardship Ministry Meeting (Rm 310)
6:30 Common Ground Recovery Ministries Support Groups

Wednesday, December 18, 2019

7:00 Elders' Breakfast (Rm 405/Chapel)
9:00 CCF Spanish (Rm 220)
10:30 Sheri Sutton's Advent Bible Study (Rm 310)
6:00 Christmas Fellowship Dinner & Children's Pageant (Fellowship Hall)
7:30-8:30 Chancel Choir (Stratten Hall)

Thursday, December 19, 2019

9:00 CWF Group 3 Birthday Breakfast (IHOP on SW Pkwy)
1:30 Knit Wits (Parlor)
6:00 Through the Bible in a Year (Rm 310)

Friday, December 20, 2019

9:00 CCF Music (Rm 220)
8:00pm Youth Lock-In Begins
Saturday, December 21, 2019

8:00am Youth Lock-In Ends

SERVING SUNDAY

ELDERS

12/8: Sally Hastings, Alice Gordon; Linda Cook, Presiding
12/15: Robert Hernandez, Woody Gossom; Kathleen Lauck, Presiding

DIACONATE COMMUNION VISITATION

12/8: Sarah Cook, John Cook, Davidson Cook
12/15: Ronnie James, Sandy Hay, Stacey Strickland

DIACONATE COMMUNION PREPARATION

12/8: Sandy Hay & Nancy Smith
12/15: Scot Hafley & Ronnie James

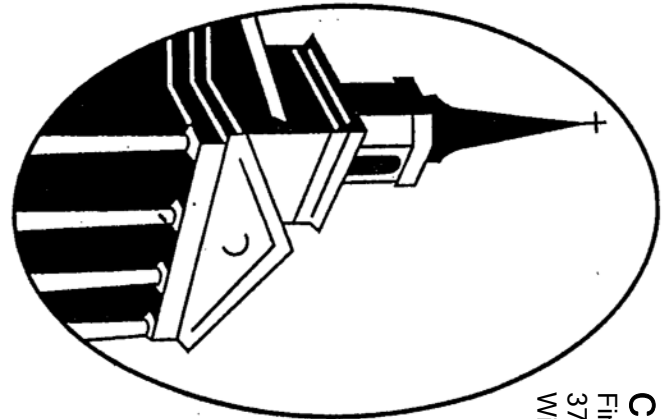
DECEMBER DIACONATE SERVERS

Sandy Hay and Ashley & Kyle Burross, Co-Captains

Sarah & John Cook, Eric Hartman, Mac Reid, Sally Wilson, Scot Hafley, Hollie Murphey, Nancy Smith, Philip Dudenhoefter, Ronnie James, David & Stacey Strickland, Davidson Cook, Isabell Murphey.

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
Rev. Josh deSteiguer, Minister 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	
Karen Watson, Receptionist		Debbie Watson, Organist	



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