



# Christian Challenger

Vol. 67

March 25, 2020

No. 6



Join us for a Drive In Communion Service again this Sunday, March 29, at 9:00 am in the East Parking Lot. Park your car facing the temporary chancel (towards the building). Please remain in your car throughout.

Each car will be given an order of worship and pre-sealed communion as you pull in. The order of worship will have a phone number for you to call. This will enable you to listen to this simple service, which will feature prayer, song, scripture, and a brief message. Be sure to bring your cell phone!!

You will also be able to drop off your tithes and offerings as you leave.

This service will NOT be streamed, but our 10:45 am worship service from the Sanctuary will be broadcast on Facebook Live on our Facebook page: "First Christian Church, Wichita Falls".



**SAVE THE DATE: VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**

July 13–17, 2020, "To Mars And Beyond", Ephesians 3:20

# Make Your Mark

Dr. Mark R. Bender  
Senior Minister



## Where is the Church?

“The Church needs to do something about that.”

Ministers hear that statement often. Most of the time, it is a congregation member expressing a good idea; a way to meet needs. Something like, “The church needs to do something about...” [kids going hungry, church members who need help with small projects around their house, helping this ministry thrive, etc.] Their statements suggesting the church respond to these needs are born out of their passion and Christian concern for their neighbors.

Occasionally, though, the statement about the church *doing something about “x”* is really a statement asking ‘*why aren’t the ministers doing something about “x.”*’ I’ve been really fortunate not to experience this at here at First Christian Church. That’s not because your ministerial staff is doing everything perfectly - attending to every need, teaching every disciple, equipping every member for mission. Instead, I believe the rarity of this question is because, as a congregation, we have a healthy understanding of each person’s role in the ministry of the church.

That’s been particularly apparent in the last two weeks. Two weeks ago, I wrote a *Challenger* article about civility and the posture of discipleship. These things are still important and maybe even more critical to us now as followers of Christ, but, my, how the landscape of concern has changed over the last two weeks... Two weeks ago, we were only beginning to think about how COVID-19 might affect us as a nation. At the church, we were wondering about whether we could livestream a worship service - something we had been considering but had never done before - just in case a *few* of our members couldn’t come to church. We were giving thought to what pastoral visits would look like and how we would minimize exposure as we visited our members. We were plowing ahead as though COVID-19 would be a temporarily inconvenience...that everything would be back to normal by the end of the month.

Well, things are quite different two weeks later. Although in the grand scheme of things, the restrictions COVID-19 places on us will be temporary, the inconvenience is going to be longer than we expected. We don’t know how long, but things probably won’t be back to normal on April 1. Likewise, instead of livestreaming worship to a small segment of the congregation who can’t get out, we are broadcasting worship for the entire congregation who can’t/shouldn’t get out. And, pastoral visits are almost exclusively being done by phone. The way we are doing ministry today is far different than the way we did ministry two weeks ago.

Yet, the church is still being the church. Each of you has accepted your mission of witness and service that came with your baptism...and you’ve been living it out in the ways you check on each other, care for one another, and commit to the ministry of this congregation, even when we find things to be far different than they were 14 days ago.

I am so proud of the way our congregation has stepped up in the midst of a changing environment. Our Elders have not stopped their weekly ministry to our homebound members, but are calling and checking on each one each week. Our Shepherds are reaching out to members of our congregation to maintain connections and pass information both ways. Our worship team and staff have completely transitioned worship to an online version and a parking lot communion service. Our ministry to children is continuing both online and in drive-up Sunday School packets. Our ministry to youth continues with online teaching and digital gatherings. Our fellowship efforts have been revamped to foster fun and faithful connections through social media. And, in an effort to meet critical needs, our Executive Council voted to forward all of the planned distributions for 2020 to four Outreach partners most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In other words, instead of distributing funds to these partners month-by-month, we are giving them our entire annual donation now. Our commitment to being church has not stopped.

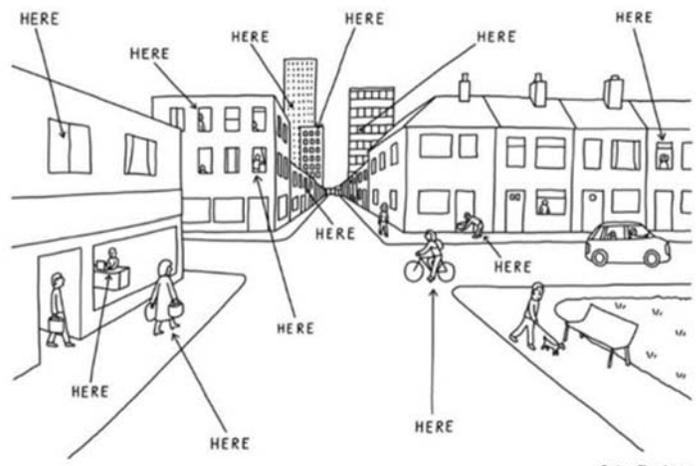
There is no doubt that these are uncertain times. But, as a congregation, we are responding confidently and proactively. We are doing this because we know that the Church will prevail. Our faith, our history, and our Lord remind us of that. And, our mission of *shepherding every person to encounter the abundant peace of Christ* isn’t just a mission for when things are “normal.” It is our mission all the time. It’s your mission all the time.

As I said Sunday at the Drive In Communion Service, toilet paper, paper towels, and hand sanitizer might not be abundant, but the peace of Christ is abundant. In a time where scarcity thinking and anxious distress might be the norm, I’m grateful that our church is thinking abundantly and peacefully. We are giving abundantly to our neighbors in need. We are worshiping and fellowshiping abundantly online. We are calling on each other abundantly. We are extending grace and peace abundantly. That’s our mission. And if we keep our focus on Jesus Christ and the mission he has given to us as First Christian Church, Wichita Falls, these days, and the days on the “other side” of this current chapter will be exciting and bright.

So, where is the church? It’s where you are. And when the church “needs to do something about that,” I’m grateful that YOU are doing it!

Mark

## WHERE THE CHURCH IS



# FCC MINISTRY NEWS AND CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS



Don't Forget to "Like Us" on 

The **Challenger** is biweekly, with the next publication on April 8! FCC Ministry News is sent by email every Monday.

## Member News:

♥**Hospitalized:** at Windmill Rehab are Gretchen Bridgman & Camille Brookshire. Released and back home are Kathy Bauer, Larry Carr.

♥Our sympathies are extended to Renee Harris on learning of the death of her husband, Rev. Dan Harris, on March 14<sup>th</sup>, in San Antonio TX. Services were March 21<sup>st</sup> in San Antonio.



Electronic Giving is a convenient and secure way to provide consistent financial support to our church. You can now make contributions to First Christian Church anytime. Just look for the *GivePlus Church* app in the App Store or Google Play. You can quickly and easily donate using your debit/credit card or checking/savings account.



## April Birthdays

- 1 Shirley Beck, Harry Cobble III, Kristie Jones
- 2 Paul Loskot
- 3 Bud Love
- 4 Amy Berry, Mark Zug
- 5 Randy Long, Kyle Morris, Karen Murdock
- 6 Melba Anastopoulos, Jason Barker, Karen LaValley
- 7 Zetty Anderson, John Kable
- 8 Debbie Carlton, Emily Clements
- 9 Sandra Ketchum, Jo Ella Rice
- 10 Cathy Gately, Patrick Jackson, John Opie, Fred Ridenour
- 11 Hayley Boydston, David Collins, Ed Robinson
- 12 Mark Gibson, Haze Rodriguez
- 13 Fred Gentry, Delaney Murdock, Richard Wearth Jr.
- 15 Galen Wells
- 16 Dave Brummett, Cesar Opela
- 17 Judy Clymer
- 18 David Sabine
- 19 Linda Christoff
- 21 Jason Appling, Susan Buckley
- 22 Lynette Gill
- 24 Luke Machado, Ethan Pettibon, H.P. Schuele, Matthew Tatro
- 25 Nancy Jolliff
- 26 Scott Raber, Charlie Stewart
- 27 Gary Ballard, Larry Ballard
- 28 Michael Allison, John Christoff, Mark A. Vallejo, Yasmine Wise
- 29 Amy Churchill, Sherry Maulden
- 30 Sherrie Phillips, Sloane Westbrook

## April Anniversaries

- 2 Kalyn & Blake Dabbs, Cary & Doug Thompson
- 9 Sandra Ketchum & Jerry Whatley
- 13 Donna & Tom Long Jr., Sharon & Kerry Roach
- 15 Joanne & Mark Zellner
- 21 Kellie & Logan Wostal
- 22 Cal & Buddy Edgemon Jr.
- 25 Cindy & Robert Hernandez
- 26 Lynda & Virgil Lee
- 29 Catherine & Jon Earley



## FOR THE RECORD...

CGRM: (Tues., Mar. 17)	Did not meet
Wednesday Online Prayer Service (Wed., Mar. 18)	33
Sunday School (Sun. Mar. 22)	Did not meet
Worship (Mar. 22): 9:00am Drive-In Communion Service	90
10:45am Online Facebook Page	162
Total Worship	285
Sunday Receipts Needed Per Week	\$18,362.35
Sunday Receipts for 3/22/20	\$4,769.00
Through Mar. 23: Income	\$225,573.42
Expenses	\$212,037.66

## This Sunday:

"The Kingdom of Heaven"  
Matthew 13:44-52  
Dr. Mark Bender

## OPPORTUNITIES

Sunday, March 29, 2020

9:00 Drive-In Communion Service (East Parking Lot)  
NO Sunday School or Journey Through Scripture  
10:45 Worship (Watch the Livestream on Facebook.com/  
FCCWF)

Monday, March 30, 2020

7:30-6:00 Children Come First "CCF" (M-F)  
9:00 CCF Chapel (Chapel)

Tuesday, March 31, 2020

9:30 FCC Staff Meeting (Rm 310)

Wednesday, April 1, 2020

7:00 Elders' Breakfast (Fellowship Hall)  
9:00 CCF Spanish (Rm 220)  
6:00 Wednesday Prayer Service (Watch the Livestream on  
Facebook.com/FCCWF)

Thursday, April 2, 2020

Friday, April 3, 2020

9:00 CCF Music (Rm 220)

Sunday, April 5, 2020

PALM SUNDAY

9:00 Drive-In Communion Service (East Parking Lot)  
NO Sunday School or Journey Through Scripture  
10:45 Worship (Watch the Livestream on Facebook.com/  
FCCWF)

## SERVING SUNDAY ELDERS

3/29: Woody Gossom, Kathleen Lauck; Richard Phillips, Presiding  
4/5: Rick Appling, Sherry Tucker; Sandra Ross, Presiding

**DIACONATE COMMUNION VISITATION**

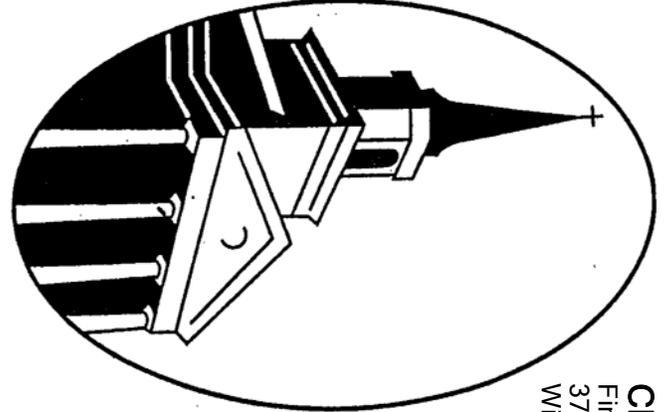
## **DIACONATE COMMUNION PREPARATION**

### **MARCH DIACONATE SERVERS**

Dave Clark, Captain  
Ashley & Kyle Burross, Linda Gipson, Ann Kable, Curtis Sullivan, Brandi Brannon,  
Fred Gentry, Margaret Phillips, Fred & Jane Ridenour, Jodi Bender, Leann Elder,  
Robert Hastings, Stacey Lingbeek, Ashley Warton, Abby Bender.

### **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	



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



We are partnering with the children's ministries of First United Methodist and First Presbyterian to spread hope and connection (at a safe distance) in our neighborhoods. Anyone and everyone is welcome to join!

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.