



Christian Challenger

Vol. 67

April 8, 2020

No. 7

Holy Week

Prepare your hearts and minds for Easter as we remember the final hours of Jesus' earthly life.

Wednesday Night Prayer Gathering

6:00 pm | Facebook Live

This 15-20 minute time of prayer will draw us to the Garden of Gethsemane to "watch" with Jesus.

Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service

6:30 pm | Facebook Live

This service, which moves us from light to darkness, powerfully tells the Passion story through words and music.

24 Hour Prayer Vigil

Begins at 8:00 pm Thursday, April 9 | Ends at 8:00 pm Friday, April 10

Sign up online at: FCCHOLYWEEK.COM for a 30-minute time slot for prayer from your house. Materials to guide your prayer will be emailed to you.

Good Friday Meditation

Friday morning, you will receive an email with a brief video meditation. Find a quiet moment sometime that day to watch this video and recall Jesus' final hours on the cross.

Easter Sunday Worship

7:00 am | Sunrise Service | Facebook Live

9:00 am | Adult Sunday School Class | Zoom

10:45 am | Traditional Service | Facebook Live

Celebrate with joy the resurrection of Jesus Christ as we worship together online at 7:00 am and 10:45 am, this Sunday, April 12. Put on those Easter outfits and gather the family for a time of worship and proclamation that Christ has risen!

Help Our Community

Our friends at Interfaith Outreach have distributed more than 2,200 pounds of food to people in our community. That is the amount of food normally distributed in a month. With many in our community now without steady income, they are turning to partners like Interfaith Outreach for help with feeding their families.

Some of you may find yourself in that same reality. If so, please let the church know so that we can help as we can. But for those who have not been as dramatically impacted by the economic losses associated with COVID-19, now is the time to step up and help our neighbors. The Gospel of Luke records Jesus saying, "to everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required" (12:48). And in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says describes the righteous as those who "gave me food when I was hungry" (25:35). Let's live out of an abundance mindset, rather than a scarcity mindset, and help our neighbors weather this crisis.

Here are some ways you can help those neighbors through Interfaith:

Donate food

You can help keep the pantry shelves filled by:

1. Donating some extras that you may have;
2. Picking up a few additional cans when you *have* to go shop for your household; or
3. Ordering some food for Interfaith and having it shipped from an online source. [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com), [Walmart](https://www.walmart.com), [Jet.com](https://www.jet.com) and others are shipping food, but deliveries are taking longer than usual.

If you have food you want to donate directly, you can bring it to Interfaith (1101 11th St.), which is only open on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday right now. However, please do not make an extra trip out - continue to shelter in place. You can also drop food off at the church. A large box is on the porch by the Chapel entrance and it will be emptied daily. A third option is for you to call Interfaith (940-322-1365) and arrange for an Interfaith staff member to pick up the food from your porch.

Write a Note

People who come to Interfaith to receive food need help feeding themselves and their families. They could also use encouragement during these difficult times. As you continue to shelter in place, write a caring note or card - and sign your first name only. These will be placed in the grocery sack that is sent home with the client. These notes can be mailed in a larger envelope to Interfaith, or placed in the food collection box outside the Chapel entrance at church. Here are some scripture ideas for your notes: (Continued on page 3)

Make Your Mark

Dr. Mark R. Bender
Senior Minister



Why We Need This Week

It's Holy Week. As I said in the sermon last Sunday, Holy Week functions like the "memories" function on our social media feeds. It "pops-up" every year to remind us of some things - some heavy things; some memorable things; some heartbreaking things; some hopeful things; some celebratory things. This year, while different, is no exception.

In January, the church staff spent two days on retreat thinking about and planning some of the key ministries of 2020. A chunk of our time was spent on Holy Week. There were plans for a Palm Sunday processional, a fellowship dinner, and an Easter Egg Hunt on the grounds. There were plans for a special Neighborhood worship on Wednesday of Holy Week. There were plans for Maundy Thursday that included a dinner and powerful Tenebrae service, complete with compelling music from the choir. There were plans for a small Good Friday service at noon in the Chapel, where we would remember Jesus' final words from the cross. And there were plans for a glorious sunrise service and two traditional services on Easter Sunday with brass ensemble, baptisms, celebration, and more.

As you know, most of those plans have changed. In a short time period, the staff has reconfigured services, postponed what can be delayed, and restructured everything we could for online engagement. None of it is ideal. But neither is it average...makeshift...second rate. It's just...different.

I've heard numerous professionals describe what many of us are experiencing as grief. Some of our grief is clear. We grieve the tragic losses of life affecting people we love. We grieve the loss of those whose art/craft/skill we listened to and enjoyed. We grieve the loss of thousands of citizens of our country who we do not know but with whom we share a bond of allegiance and national pride.

We grieve with those who suffer from COVID-19. We grieve with those medical professionals who are giving everything they can - physically, emotionally, and professionally - yet find these resources depleted as they care for tens of thousands of affected citizens. We grieve with families who cannot be with their loved ones as they suffer. We grieve with families who cannot be together for funerals and graveside services.

We grieve the loss of jobs. We grieve with those families who now have no income. We grieve with those who suffer the ripple effects - where one person's inability to pay his or her bill makes the recipient unable to pay his or her bill, and so on.

These are a few of the ways our grief is obvious. Some of our grief is less clear.

We grieve the loss of freedom. We grieve the fact that we can't go sit down and order food at our favorite Tex - Mex restaurant. We grieve that we can't get together with friends. We grieve that we can't walk down the hall and

talk to our coworkers. We grieve that our kids can't have sleepovers and participate in extracurricular activities. We grieve that we have to wear masks in those limited moments that we do venture out.

We grieve the plans we have made that have been altered. We grieve the dreams that have been put on hold because of financial losses. We grieve the sense of routine we once had.

I think grief is a powerful way to describe the way we feel right now. And as descriptive as that word is for the range of emotions we are experiencing, it is also the right word to describe our need for engaging anew with the events of Holy Week.

We need the anchor that comes from Maundy Thursday - remembering again those words of Jesus...this is my body...this is the cup of the new covenant...do this in remembrance of me.

We need the chilling reminder of Good Friday - the agony of the cross, the sense of isolation, the sting of rejection. We need the personal pain that comes from realizing:

*He was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5)*

We need the powerful strains of Easter Sunday - the choruses of *Christ the Lord is Risen Today!*, the scriptures' mocking: *Where, O death is your sting?* (Romans 15:55), the assurance that comes with the resurrection that nothing (even death) can separate us from the love of God we know in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:31-39).

What Holy Week reminds us is that we do not grieve as those who have no hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13). Instead, the potential of Holy Week is the strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow it gives. Holy Week and its movements serve as balm for our grief.

So, let's engage. Let's allow the events of Holy Week to do their work in our lives. Let's give our full selves to the wonder of Maundy Thursday, to remembering Good Friday, and to celebrating Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday. Yes, it will look different, sound different, and be different. But, perhaps, that disruption may be just what we need for a time like this.

Mark

**IT'S
DIFFERENT**

FCC MINISTRY NEWS AND CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS



The **Challenger** is biweekly, with the next publication on April 22! FCC Ministry News is sent by email every Monday.

Easter Offering: *"This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." - Psalm 118:24 NRSV*

Across the United States, Canada, and beyond, Disciples are rejoicing in all that the Lord has made. This Easter, we rejoice together as one Church, as the One Body of Christ. We rejoice in all that we accomplish together, and the work God accomplishes through us.

Let us rejoice that the Easter offering, through Disciples Mission Fund, makes the General Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) - and so much more - possible. Through the General Ministries of our Church, lives are changed and our world is transformed. **Will you rejoice with us and give to this special day offering?**

You can give online at disciplesmissionfund.org or mail your donation to the church office and designate "Easter Offering" on the memo line.

Children Come First: While our classrooms may be empty, staff are still working hard keeping our children engaged and keeping positive relationships with our families. Staff created private Facebook pages to share activities and for families to share pictures of their children participating in activities. Each day staff host live circle times where all the children in the class can interact with each other. Teachers are posting videos of them reading book and singing their favorite songs. They also share activities daily on their pages. Staff complete lesson plans each week just like normal so everything they are doing meets all of the domains normally covered in our classrooms. Before the inside of our classrooms closed, each child went home with packets from their teachers and all the art supplies they would need for school at home. The most important thing about distant learning for us is that we keep positive relationships and ensure that each child knows that we love them and miss them. Every staff member conducts one on one Facetime with each of their students twice a week. We would all much rather be in our classrooms but we are making distant learning fun and engaging.

Help Our Community Continued

Be joyful in hope, patient in suffering and faithful in prayer. (Romans 12:12)

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not rely on your own insight. (Proverbs 3:5)

Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. (1 Corinthians 16:13)

Nothing will be impossible with God. (Luke 1:37)

Protect me, O God, for in You I take refuge. (Psalm 16)

Pray

As you shelter in place at home, please pray. Our friend, Kris Gossom, Executive Director at Interfaith, told me:

Pray for the clients who struggle with loss of so many things in their lives. Not having school is not a vacation for most children. For families who live in the margins, school life is vital for them. The social contacts, the adult role models, the food and shelter - all are really being missed by so many families. So many families are just in limbo wondering what will happen to them in the future.

Pray for the volunteers - most of them are sheltering in place at home. They would much rather be at Interfaith - helping the clients and visiting with their friends there.

Pray for the staff - they miss their volunteers so much! They also miss the contact with the clients. No hugs, no sweet stories, no one to help in a human significant way.

Finally, if you would like to support Interfaith with a financial gift, you can mail your donation to Interfaith (1101 11th St., Wichita Falls, TX 76301), or you can donate on their [website](#).

This is a time to let our light shine - in our commitment to worship and study, and in our commitment to loving our neighbors. Let's do both this week!

April Scripture Readings

1 Judges 6:11-16	16 Matthew 8:23-27
2 Isaiah 43:1-3	17 Genesis 15:5-15
3 Psalm 105:1-6	18 1 John 3:1-3
4 2 Corinthians 5:16-21	19 John 20:11-22
5 John 17:13-26	20 Psalm 23:1-6
6 Psalm 34:1-8	21 Luke 22:39-43
7 Revelation 22:1-5	22 Numbers 11:21-30
8 1 Peter 2:18-24	23 2 Kings 5:1-15
9 2 Peter 3:1-9	24 2 Corinthians 4:11-5:4
10 Luke 18:15-17	25 Psalm 119:105-112
11 Matthew 28:1-10	26 John 14:15-31
12 Philippians 3:7-11	27 2 Timothy 4:1-8
13 Psalm 16:5-11	28 Psalm 118:5-9
14 Colossians 3:12-17	29 Matthew 20:29-34
15 2 Corinthians 12:7-10	30 Micah 6:6-8

FOR THE RECORD...

CGRM: (Tues., Mar. 31)	Did not meet
Wednesday Online Prayer Service (Wed., Apr. 1)	26
Sunday School (Sun. Apr. 5)	Did not meet
Worship (Apr. 5): 10:45am Online Facebook Page	181
Total Worship	
207	
Sunday Receipts Needed Per Week	\$18,362.35
Sunday Receipts for 4/5/20	\$
Through Apr. 6: Income \$	Expenses \$

This Sunday:

"Come to Believe"
John 20:19-29
Dr. Mark Bender

OPPORTUNITIES

Thursday, April 9, 2020

MAUNDY THURSDAY

6:30pm Maundy Thursday Service (Watch the Livestream on Facebook.com/FCCWF)

8:00pm 24-Hour Prayer Vigil Begins

Friday, April 9, 2020

GOOD FRIDAY

8:00pm 24-Hour Prayer Vigil Ends

Sunday, April 12, 2020

EASTER

7:00 Sunrise Service (Watch the Livestream on Facebook.com/FCCWF)

9:30 Adult Sunday School Class (via Zoom)

10:45 Worship (Watch the Livestream on Facebook.com/FCCWF)

7:00 Youth (Grades 6-12) (via Instagram Live)

Monday, April 13, 2020

Church Building, Offices & All Programs Closed

Tuesday, April 14, 2020

9:30 FCC Staff Meeting (via Zoom)

Wednesday, April 15, 2020

7:00 Elders' Breakfast (via Zoom)

6:00 Wednesday Prayer Service (Watch the Livestream on Facebook.com/FCCWF)

7:00 Youth (Grades 6-12) (via Instagram Live)

Thursday, April 16, 2020

6:00 College Bible Study (via Zoom)

Sunday, April 19, 2020

9:30 Adult Sunday School Class (via Zoom)

10:45 Worship (Watch the Livestream on Facebook.com/FCCWF)

6:00 Sunday Night Fellowship Live! (Watch the Livestream on Facebook.com/FCCWF)

7:00 Youth (Grades 6-12) (via Instagram Live)

Monday, April 20, 2020

Church Building, Offices & All Programs Closed

Tuesday, April 21, 2020

9:30 FCC Staff Meeting (via Zoom)

Wednesday, April 22, 2020

7:00 Elders' Breakfast (via Zoom)

6:00 Wednesday Prayer Service (Watch the Livestream on Facebook.com/FCCWF)

7:00 Youth (Grades 6-12) (via Instagram Live)

Thursday, April 23, 2020

6:00 College Bible Study (via Zoom)

Member News:

♥**Hospitalized:** at URHCS are Carolyn Ford and Tom Long Jr.; at Windmill Rehab is Gretchen Bridgman; at House of Hope are Jean Puckett & Glorie Steele. Released and back home is Camille Brookshire.

♥Our sympathies are extended to Shirley Steele and Glorie Steele on learning of the death of their husband and son-in-law, Bob Rescorla, on March 24th in Austin TX.

♥Our condolences are extended to Sherry Tucker on learning of the death of her father, Fred Hamburger, on April 3rd in Lawton OK.

SERVING SUNDAY

ELDERS

4/12: Emily Wilson, Gary Ballard; Cheryl Smiley, Presiding
4/19: Ricky Scales, Linda C. Carr; Cindy Hernandez, Presiding

DIACONATE COMMUNION VISITATION

DIACONATE COMMUNION PREPARATION

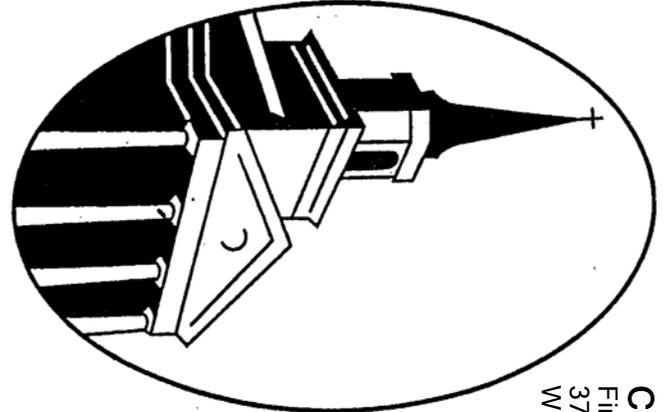
APRIL DIACONATE SERVERS

Twila Boydston, Captain

Debi & Larry Ballard, Alan Freeman, Kris Gossom, Hollie Murphey, Liz Thomas, Shirley Craft, Ronnie James, Jim & Karen LaValley, James Poole, Jaiden "JJ" Johnson, Sheila Reynolds, Tyler Thomas, Isabell Murphey, Emily Thomas.

THE CHURCH STAFF . . .

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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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