



Christian Challenger

Vol. 67

May 20, 2020

No. 10



Your FCC Ministry Guide

ONLINE WORSHIP

Sanctuary Worship | Sundays at 10:45 am

Streaming on Facebook Live and YouTube

The Neighborhood Online | Wednesdays at 6:00 pm

Streaming on Facebook Live and YouTube

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Bible Story Time! | Thursdays at 7:00 pm

Join Claire and friends for Bible stories posted on the First Christian Facebook Page.

Zoom Check-Ins | Fridays at 2:00 pm

Children's ministry families can hop on with Claire and fellowship with their friends. Zoom information will be posted in the Young Disciples Facebook Page.

Online Sunday School | Friday Evenings

Sunday School videos will be posted to the Young Disciples Facebook Page for families to do together over the weekend.

YOUTH MINISTRY

Wednesday Night Zoom! | Wednesdays at 7:00 pm

Join Josh for a time of fellowship and Bible study. Email Josh (josh@firstchristianwf.com) for Zoom information.

Sunday Night Youth Hangout | Sundays at 7:00 pm

Join Josh for outdoor games. Appropriate social distancing guidelines will be followed. Bring your own dinner and a lawn chair to sit in.

COLLEGE MINISTRY

Thursday Bible Study | Thursdays at 6:00 pm

Join Josh on Zoom for Bible Study every Thursday evening. Email Josh (josh@firstchristianwf.com) for Zoom information.

ADULT MINISTRY

Adult Sunday School | Sundays at 9:30 am

Many classes have begun to meet via Zoom. Check with your class or call the church office for details.

Virtual Narthex | Sundays after the 10:45 am Worship Service

Join in a "Virtual Narthex" to share a little about life and prayer requests from our congregation. Zoom information is included in the *Friday From First* email and on Sunday morning during the live feed.

Romans Bible Study | Sundays at 4:00 pm

Join Dr. Bender for a study through the book of Romans. Email Dr. Bender for Zoom information (mark@firstchristianwf.com).

SNFL (Sunday Night Fellowship Live) | Sundays at 6:00 pm

Join in the fun and frivolity on Facebook Live.

You're invited to help celebrate
Glorie Steele's 105th birthday!

WHEN: Saturday, May 23

WHAT: A safe-distance
celebration with pizza!

WHERE: Your house!

Please take a photo of
yourself eating pizza and
send that photo to Glorie at:
gmayks@sw.rr.com or to
Shirley at:

shirleysteele01@gmail.com

A drive by parade is
also being organized for
Glorie on Saturday for 1:00
pm. Participants can meet
at House of Hope around
12:45 and the parade will
take place at 1:00 pm for
people to drive by and
wave at Glorie!



How is the Pentecost offering used?

In 2001, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) embraced a bold vision: to start 1,000 new churches in 1,000 different ways by the year 2020. Today, we have welcomed 1,034+ new places of worship into the Church. The Table around which we gather has grown in language, diversity, and life experience.



Courageous leaders have answered the call to grow the denomination through the new church movement. They have reached the underserved, welcomed new neighbors, and created communities of faith. And we, as Disciples, have committed to supporting them.

Support the 2020 Pentecost Offering. Each year, half of this offering stays in our Region to support and sustain new churches. The second half helps leaders across the United States and Canada through New Church Ministry programs.

Make a gift to the 2020 Pentecost Offering by donating online at www.disciplesmissionfund.org/give/ on Sundays, May 31 and June 7.

Thank you for your donations to the Easter Offering in April. The total collection was \$440.00.

Make Your Mark

Dr. Mark R. Bender
Senior Minister



Where our Diversity Finds Unity

Recently, my younger daughter, Abby, was working on scholarship application. One of the essays for this scholarship asked the applicant to describe the church's goals in terms of community and engagement with the wider world. As Abby and I talked through her response to that question, we noted the fact that our church holds "Open Communion" as one of our core values. I told her that this value is about more than just the practice of an "open table" when it comes to the distribution of the elements of bread and cup. The value of "Open Communion" also speaks to the way we "welcome all to the Table as Christ has welcomed us." That means that when we gather at the Lord's Table on Sundays and Wednesdays, we have:

- people who look, act, and think like us, and people who don't think, act, and look like us;
- people with tattoos and people without;
- people with long hair and people with short hair;
- people who vote one way and people who vote another;
- people who are gainfully employed and people who are searching for work;
- people who are close to our age and people who are generations apart from us;

And the list could go on... All that diversity finds unity when we gather at the Table. That's one of the hallmarks of being a part of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). We gather weekly to remember what Jesus Christ did for each of us, and that prompts us to love as he loved. Holding fast to that truth is what allows us to go to the Table side-by-side with people who may disagree with us on everything else.

In last Sunday's sermon about *Not Going Back*, I said one of the things I don't want to give up when things "open up" and return to "normal" is the practice of grace-giving. I mentioned that the uncertainty and unfamiliarity of the last two months has had everyone guessing about what to do, trying new things, and living into new realities. As a result, I seen people extending more grace to each other than in previous times. We knowingly laugh when things aren't picture-perfect in our Zoom meeting backgrounds. We're compassionate with those who struggle with technology. We're lenient with the various leaders in our lives who are trying to make the best decisions they can. These, and numerous other acts, characterize how we generously and tenderly love others.

I say all of this because we will have more opportunities for grace-giving in the coming months as a church. As we begin the slow journey back to onsite worship and the restart of our various on-campus ministries, our diversity will be apparent. Some will think we should move faster. Some will think we are moving too quickly. Some will come because the doors are open. Others will return when their personal comfort level and medical situation allows. Some will be frustrated by the safeguards employed while others will believe additional safeguards could be enacted. In other words, our return to onsite worship and activity is going to

be a test of our unity - a test to see if we really believe that our diversity finds unity at the Table of our Lord.

Last week, in an article titled *Church, Don't Let Coronavirus Divide You* (TGC, May 15, 2020) Brett McCracken wrote:

The church has an opportunity to model love that places the interests of others above the self. For example, someone might find it personally difficult—even maddening—to have to wear a mask during church and stay six feet away from everyone at all times. You might think these precautions are a needless overreaction. But here's the thing: even if it turns out you're right, can you not sacrifice your ideal for a season, out of love for others who believe the precautions are necessary? Even if you personally think it is silly, or even cowardly, for someone to stay home even after the church is open again on Sundays, can you not heed Paul's wisdom in Romans 14: "Let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother"? Or 1 Corinthians 8:9: "Be careful, however, that your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak."

Likewise, those who think the lockdowns should continue should not pass judgment on those who question the wisdom of the government's ongoing restrictions. Churches should strive to honor people on both sides of the spectrum. Yes, it will be costly for churches to keep offering online services for those who don't feel comfortable attending physical gatherings. Yes, it will be a sacrifice for church members who are sick of masks, social distancing, and Zoom to continue to use these for the sake of others. But little is more Christian than a posture of sacrifice (Rom. 12:1). We should embrace it with gladness.

McCracken then drives home this point:

As hard as it will be to practice patience, remember that in the scheme of eternity this season—whether it's months long or years—will be but a blip.



Unity is our polar star.
Barton W. Stone

I'm confident we are up to the re-entry task before us. I believe that "unity" and "grace" part of our DNA is going to show through in the coming weeks and months. I believe this practice of grace-giving is going to continue in the days ahead.

Barton Stone, one of the early founders of the movement that became the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), regularly said that Christian unity was our Movement's "polar star." But he was also quick to say that unity was not an end in itself, but the platform from which the church could more powerfully and univocally

communicate the gospel.

I believe the coming months are going to be a powerful example of how First Christian Church lives out the gospel of our Lord. I think we see our value of "Open Communion" displayed again and again. That's who we are. And I'm proud of it!

Mark

FCC MINISTRY NEWS AND CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS



The **Challenger** is biweekly, with the next publication on June 3! FCC Ministry News is sent by email every Monday.

Attention Graduates! We would like to recognize all our graduates (high school and college). If you are a graduate or have a graduate in your immediate family, please call Susan in the church office by this Friday, May 22nd, so we can get your information for the Challenger.

Pantry Sunday for Interfaith Outreach Services:

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](#), [Walmart](#), [Jet.com](#) and others are shipping food, but deliveries are taking longer than usual.

If you have food you want to donate directly, a large box is on the porch by the Chapel entrance and it will be emptied daily.

The most needed items at this time include: all kinds of vegetables but especially corn and boxed potatoes.

4. 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](#).

Member News:

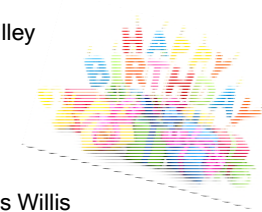
♥**Hospitalized:** at Kell West is Cora Tucker; at Baylor in Dallas is Teresa Archambo; at House of Hope are Gretchen Bridgman, Jean Puckett, Glorie Steele & Marilyn Vaughn. Released and back home is Joye Thompson.

♥Our condolences are extended to Claire Baer and Family on learning of the death of her grandmother, Verdell Baer, on May 13th.

Let's Stay Connected...

June Birthdays

- 1 Gretchen Bridgman, Harry Gordon, Mary McQueen, Ali Thompson
- 3 Donna Benson, Sandra Hayes, Jeanette Showalter
- 4 Sally Perkins, Gwynnaeth Stewart, Joe Vaccarella
- 5 Allan Jirik
- 7 Rick Appling, Dennis Schmidt, Sue Stille
- 8 Ian Anderson, Jesse Rogers
- 10 Dwight Ross III
- 12 Janie Hotchkiss, Scott Hunter
- 13 Jim Hay, Dennis Hunt
- 14 Buddy Edgemon Jr.
- 15 Kenn Hill, Sam Maynor
- 16 Melanie Hernandez, Ryan Sparks, Lois Willis
- 17 Lainey Gentry
- 18 Doug Collins, Adam Cook, Jon Kegley, Kristin Schuele, Joanne Zellner
- 19 Peggy Sue Cline, Robert Hernandez, Mistie Seguire
- 20 Janie DeVilbiss, Vivian Zug
- 21 Andrew Long
- 22 Will DeVilbiss, Abby Van De Vyvere
- 23 Josh deSteiguer, Virgil Lee, Meredith Mays
- 24 Janie Huff
- 25 Diana Collins, Landon Winstead III
- 26 June Lemmon, Jessica Morris
- 27 Camden Vieth
- 28 Carsyn Bailey, Lael Burton
- 29 Lee Bybee, Glenda Dorman
- 30 Alice Stewart, Glenn Tole II



June Anniversaries

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Kay & Richard Dalton | 14 Ann & John Kable |
| 3 Alice & Mark Vallejo | 17 Kay & Patrick Jackson |
| 5 Judy & Wayman Gore | 21 Sally & Russell Wilson |
| 6 Sandy & Jim Hay | 24 Cindy & David Collins |
| 7 Melody & Bill Jennings | 26 Jane & Fred Ridenour |
| Loni & Sal Ramirez | 27 Janice & Jim Tull |
| 12 Linda & Glenn Tole II | 30 Polly & Harry Tonemah |
| 13 Chris & Paul Loskot | |

June Scripture Readings

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Psalm 145:1-8 | 16 John 1:35-50 |
| 2 John 3:1-21 | 17 Romans 8:25-28 |
| 3 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10 | 18 Psalm 103:13-18 |
| 4 1 Samuel 1:1-28 | 19 Isaiah 46:3-4 |
| 5 Psalm 25:4-10 | 20 John 11:32-44 |
| 6 James 1:2-12 | 21 Psalm 1:1-6 |
| 7 Psalm 23:1-6 | 22 Luke 7:11-16 |
| 8 Colossians 3:15-17 | 23 James 5:13-18 |
| 9 Psalm 29:1-11 | 24 Exodus 4:10-13 |
| 10 Genesis 33:1-11 | 25 Matthew 25:14-30 |
| 11 Hebrews 13:1-3 | 26 Hebrews 10:19-25 |
| 12 Proverbs 3:5-6 | 27 Psalm 103:1-12 |
| 13 Romans 8:31-39 | 28 Mark 5:1-20 |
| 14 Psalm 34:4-7 | 29 2 Corinthians 3:1-6 |
| 15 Acts 26:12-18 | 30 Psalm 91:1-16 |

FOR THE RECORD . . .

CGRM: (Tues., May 12)	Did not meet
Wednesday Online Prayer Service (Wed., May 13)23
Sunday School (Sun. May 17 – via Zoom)38
Worship (May 17): 10:45am Online Facebook Page	208
	Total Worship: 231
Sunday Receipts Needed Per Week	\$18,362.35
Sunday Receipts for 5/17/20	\$1,565.00
Through May 18: Income \$358,540.43	Expenses \$371,218.94

This Sunday:

“Highly Exalted”
Acts 1:1-11
Dr. Mark Bender

OPPORTUNITIES

Sunday, May 24, 2020

9:30 Adult Sunday School Classes (via Zoom)
10:45 Worship (Watch the Livestream on Facebook.com/
FCCWF)

4:00 Romans Bible Study (via Zoom)
6:00 Sunday Night Fellowship Live! (Watch the Livestream
on Facebook.com/FCCWF)
7:00 Youth (Grades 6-12) (FCC Outside)

Monday, May 25, 2020

MEMORIAL DAY
Church Building, Offices & All Programs Closed
6:00 Education Ministry Meeting (via Zoom)

Tuesday, May 26, 2020

8:00-5:30 Children Come First (Tu-F)
9:30 FCC Staff Meeting (Rm 310)
6:00 Executive Council Meeting (via Zoom)

Wednesday, May 27, 2020

7:00 Elders' Breakfast (Fellowship Hall)
6:00 The Neighborhood Service (Watch the Livestream
on Facebook.com/FCCWF)
7:00 Youth (Grades 6-12) (via Instagram Live)

Thursday, May 28, 2020

6:00 College Bible Study (via Zoom)

Sunday, May 31, 2020

9:30 Adult Sunday School Classes (via Zoom)
10:45 Worship (Watch the Livestream on Facebook.com/
FCCWF)

4:00 Romans Bible Study (via Zoom)
6:00 Sunday Night Fellowship Live! (Watch the Livestream
on Facebook.com/FCCWF)
7:00 Youth (Grades 6-12) (FCC outside)

Monday, June 1, 2020

8:00-5:30 Children Come First (M-Th)

Tuesday, June 2, 2020

9:30 FCC Staff Meeting (Rm 310)
11:00 Whirlwind Cluster Ministers' Meeting

Wednesday, June 3, 2020

7:00 Elders' Breakfast (Fellowship Hall)
6:00 The Neighborhood Service (Watch the Livestream
on Facebook.com/FCCWF)
7:00 Youth (Grades 6-12) (via Instagram Live)

Thursday, June 4, 2020

6:00 College Bible Study (via Zoom)

Stewardship

How do I continue to give when I can't place my tithe
in the offering plate?

Ways to Give

ONLINE

firstchristianwf.com



BY MAIL



MOBILE APP

The GivePlus+ App

GIVE PLUS+



SERVING SUNDAY

ELDERS

5/24: Gary Ballard, Cheryl Smiley; Emily Wilson, Presiding

5/31: Linda C. Carr, Cindy Hernandez; Ricky Scales, Presiding

DIACONATE COMMUNION VISITATION

DIACONATE COMMUNION PREPARATION

MAY DIACONATE SERVERS

David Strickland, Captain

Kim Ballard, Buddy Edgemon, Lynette Gill, Scot Hafley, Nancy Smith, Teresa Archambo, Philip Dudenhoeffer, Melody Jennings, Stacey Strickland, Bob & Mary Carlton, Vicki Kunkle, Mistie Seguine, Karen Watson, Davidson Cook, Hannah Earley.

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

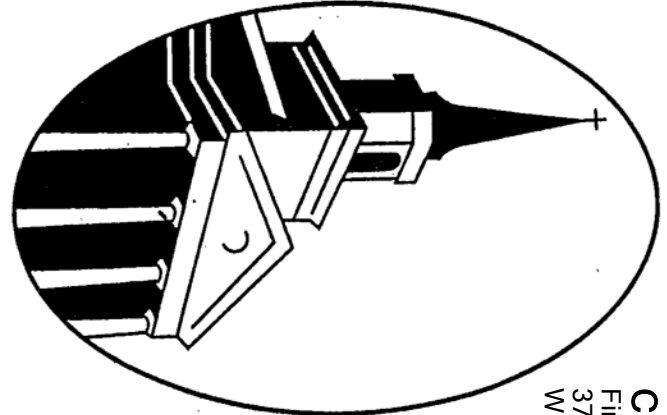
Heather Dickerson, Director of Children Come First 687-2231

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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