



Christian Challenger

Vol. 67

July 29, 2020

No. 15



Join In Worship By Phone

Especially for those who don't have internet or who have trouble with technology

Have you missed being able to worship with your First Christian Church family during the COVID-19 pandemic because you don't have good internet where you live? You can now listen to the 10:45 am worship service live through your phone. All you have to do is dial 940-FCC-1100 (940-322-1100) to connect to the worship service audio.

Plus, when you dial in, you will be asked if you would like to be notified when First Christian Church is live for worship. If you select this option, you will receive a phone call connecting you to the worship service audio stream every Sunday. You don't have to remember to call us...we'll call you!

If you would like the church office to add your phone number (or someone else's phone number) to the list to receive this automated call every Sunday, just call the church office (940-692-2282) or send us an email (mail@firstchristianwf.com).



Project Back to School and PowerPak 4 Kids Backpack Programs

We are getting closer to back to school time! That means it is time for us to support two very important programs: Project Back to School and PowerPak 4 Kids Backpack Program.

Project Back to School which ensures that no children in Wichita Falls begins school without the supplies they need. For about \$20, a student will receive grade-appropriate school supplies and a backpack. These supplies and backpacks will be available at each WFISD campus.

PowerPak 4 Kids Backpack Program was created by the Food Bank As many children in the WFISD who rely on free or reduced-price lunches during the week go home to little, or no, healthy foods over the weekend. PowerPaks 4 Kids are bags of nutritious and easy-to-prepare foods (such as peanut butter, fruit cups, cereal, trail mix, and more) that are handed discreetly to a child (usually placed in their backpacks) at the end of the school week.

Support both of these worthy programs that will help nurture and nourish the children in our community. The deadline for donations is Sunday, August 2. Just indicate "Back to School" on the memo line of your check that you mail, or take, to the church office. Thanks in advance for your support!

Opportunity for FCC to Help MSU Students

This August, we have the opportunity to help incoming students at MSU. Although the number of international students coming is unknown given the current situation, when students arrive, they will be given a welcome letter from FCC. This letter will list the normal household items we've provided in the past, allowing each student to indicate what they need. If you would like to help fulfill items on these lists, sign up by calling the church office. These lists will be distributed for fulfillment around August 20.



Once the items have been gathered, the student will be contacted and a time will be arranged to leave it on their door step (while honoring social distancing). We will know these students' names and be able to say "welcome" in person. If you would like to help with the delivery, just let our Outreach team know, or call me with any questions you have.

Out of necessity I believe this year could be even more meaningful for our church members and these students. Thank you in advance for being such a caring and giving FCC family.

Sally Hastings
940-224-4416



Join us for a "Cardboard Car Show" and Drive-In Movie!

Friday, August 7

Car Show - 8:00 pm

Movie - 8:45 pm

Create/decorate your very own cardboard car and come show it off before a drive in movie! Prizes will be awarded and snacks will be available! All ages are encouraged to participate! We will have a limited number of extra boxes if someone needs one!

Make Your Mark

Dr. Mark R. Bender
Senior Minister



Reengaging with Scripture

Last year, our Vision Team uncovered our core values as a congregation. One of these core values is being *Firm in our Foundation*. Included in this value is our longstanding commitment as a congregation to anchoring ourselves to scripture. We believe that the Bible still speaks to us - informing, forming, and transforming us.

This value is why we declared that we would have a 20/20 focus on the Bible in the year 2020. We wanted to use this year to engage with the narrative of scripture by looking at 100 essential scriptures (E-100) that form the bones (framework) of the Bible. As I said in a recent sermon, we did this really well until March 15. Then, when COVID-19 forced so many changes in our worship life, we modified our E-100 plan - first on Wednesday nights in *The Neighborhood*, and then this summer in our Sunday Morning Worship Series - to address the "felt needs" this crisis had revealed.

You might think that during a crisis, people would turn to scripture for words of comfort, hope, assurance, and peace. When everything seems so uncertain, it would seem that the words found in our Bibles could provide confidence and conviction to our wavering faith. It would make sense that in a time when so many activities have been cancelled and we've been left with more time at home, there might be more time for the spiritual discipline of engaging with scripture.

Unfortunately, a recent report from the Barna Group and American Bible Society (ABS) suggests otherwise. Between early 2019 and 2020, the percentage of US adults who say they use the Bible daily dropped from 14 percent to 9 percent - an unprecedented drop in the annual survey's 10-year history. Further, amid the pandemic, a larger decline occurred among the Americans who say their choices and relationships are shaped by the Bible, a group the ABS calls "Bible engaged." In January, 27.8 percent of American adults were Bible engaged. By June, that figure was down to 22.6 percent.

According to this report, when the pandemic hit in March, there were initial signs it might be having an overall positive effect on American spirituality:

Three of the largest online evangelism ministries—Global Media Outreach, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, and Cru—all reported increases of people seeking online information about knowing Jesus. The spike in curiosity was corroborated by ABS, which found more Americans exploring the Bible for the first time in June than January. But apparently the spike in curiosity didn't translate into engagement.

Interestingly, though, there was one group whose Bible use did increase during the pandemic - Americans who lost loved ones to COVID-19. About half (49%) of Americans with a family member living in their household who died of coronavirus said they increased their use of the Bible—2.3 times more than average. Thirty-six percent of those with a neighbor who died of the virus increased

their Bible use (1.7 times more than average), and 33 percent of those with a close personal friend who died increased their use (1.6 times more than average).

So what does all this mean? And what does this suggest that we need to do as disciples of

Jesus Christ living in Wichita Falls in this crazy year 2020? Chris Hall, president of the spiritual formation ministry Renovaré, suggests the disruption of life rhythms likely hurt Bible engagement. So, to counter this pandemic-prompted morass in Bible engagement, Hall calls on Christians to "learn to read the Bible in a new way." That could include using a Bible app that plays music as a person reads or a Bible app that reads a selected passage aloud repeatedly. "Think about the possibilities that the pandemic is offering," he said, "rather than simply what is negative."

Donald Whitney, the author of *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* agrees. "One way to reengage with Scripture is by meditating on it. Christians should 'read big, meditate small,' reading a larger passage and then spending a few minutes thinking about one verse or phrase." Praying the passage and coming up with an illustration are two ways of mediating suggested by Whitney.

So let's do that together. As a congregation whose mission is to *shepherd every person to encounter the abundant peace of Christ*, meditate on the words of instruction Jesus gave to his disciples in the Upper Room:

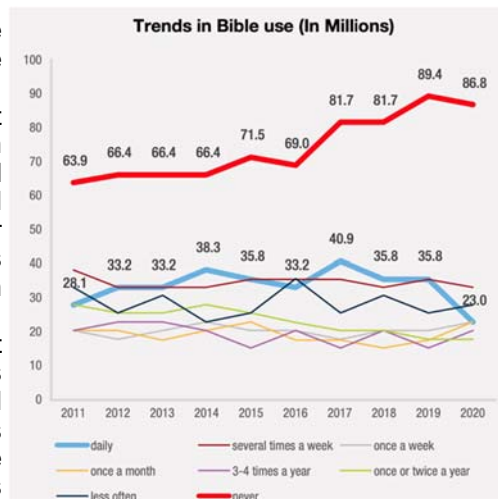
"I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." (John 14:25-27)

Pause for a few moments in silence and then read this passage again. What words stick out to you? What promises do you find reassuring? What "takeaways" will change the way you go about your day?

As we venture into the remaining five months of 2020, let's commit to reengaging with scripture. Let's allow scripture to speak a word to us. Let's allow scripture to shape us more fully as Christians. And let's allow scripture to push us into a hurting world with the good news of the Gospel.

Mark

P.S. If you need some help getting started, here are a few passages to "read big" and "meditate small" over: Matthew 5-7; Luke 11:1-13; John 13-17; Romans 8:31-39; Galatians 5:14-25; Philippians 4:4-9; Hebrews 4:14-16; James 1; 1 Peter 1:13-16.



FCC MINISTRY NEWS AND CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS



Join us on the East Parking lot Sunday mornings at 8:40 am for a Drive-In Communion service! This short service features hymns, prayers, a message, and communion. Come start your Sunday with this Onsite Worship Experience.

The **Challenger** is biweekly, with the next publication on August 12! FCC Ministry News is sent by email every Monday.

Member News:

♥**Hospitalized:** no one. Released and back home are Mary K. Carroll, Ted Smith and Frances Williams. Now living at the House of Hope is Carolyn Ford.

♥Our sympathies are extended to Shirley Steele and Family on learning of the death of her mother, Glorie Steele on July 15th. Graveside services were held on July 21st.

Pantry Sunday for Interfaith Outreach Services: You can help keep the pantry shelves filled by:

1. Donating items needed for Pantry Sunday in August: **The collected item(s) will be: jars of jelly (large and small) and toilet paper.**

2. Donating any type of food items directly anytime into the large box on the porch by the Chapel entrance. It will be emptied daily over the summer.

3. 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](#).

Don't Forget to "Like Us" on



Or Subscribe to "Us" on



August Birthdays

- 1 Annetta Vaccarella
- 2 Nancy Jirik, Elizabeth Powers, Bill Willis
- 3 Pat Sutton Hoeffner, Paula Ward
- 4 Madi Showalter
- 5 Samantha Preston
- 6 Alice West
- 7 Kay Jackson, Karen Rogers
- 9 Davidson Cook
- 11 Denise Robinette, Terry Walker
- 12 Judy Gore, Cary Thompson
- 14 Libby Gentry, Logan Powers, April Soakie
- 15 Clara Dabbs
- 16 Mark Bender, Cheryl Caraway, Jonathan Lyne, Karen Watson
- 17 Richard Dalton, Mary Kay Dolberry
- 18 Steve Holland, Michelle Pontius
- 19 Joye Thompson
- 20 Tonia Machado, Rylan Morris
- 21 Randy Wineinger
- 22 Abby Wright
- 23 Francine Carraro, Lisa Pullam, Dwight Tuttle
- 24 Ami Ground, Lou Murdock, Cora Tucker
- 25 Diana Costello, Charlee Kate Lester, Darlene Moore
- 27 Judie Brunson
- 29 Cal Edgemon
- 30 Ashley Barker, Michael Stewart, Andrea Woods

August Anniversaries

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2 Susan & John Buckley | 14 Amy & Blayne Berry |
| 3 Ami & Cody Ground | 15 Carol & Bill Robison |
| 4 Margaret & Richard Phillips | 18 Cathy & Jim Biggs III |
| 7 Kim & Gary Ballard | 19 Cheryl & Jerry Caraway |
| 11 Linda & Nick Gipson | Melissa & Jim Hogan |
| Carly & Slate Westbrook | 23 Karen & Jim LaValley |
| 12 Cathy & David Gately | 24 Mary & Rene Brock |

August Scripture Readings

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 Psalm 120:1-7 | 17 Romans 8:31-39 |
| 2 Colossians 3:12-17 | 18 Philippians 4:4-9 |
| 3 Psalm 104:31-34 | 19 Matthew 5:13-16 |
| 4 Hebrews 12:1-3 | 20 Isaiah 43:16-21 |
| 5 John 17:1-8 | 21 Matthew 6:9-13 |
| 6 Psalm 46:1-11 | 22 Galatians 5:16-25 |
| 7 Job 37:14-24 | 23 Mark 16:9-20 |
| 8 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 | 24 Luke 18:18-23 |
| 9 Philippians 2:1-4 | 25 1 Corinthians 12:5-6, 12-27 |
| 10 Hebrews 4:12-16 | 26 Matthew 22:36-40 |
| 11 Luke 15:1-3, 11-32 | 27 Philippians 3:10-14 |
| 12 Isaiah 40:28-31 | 28 Ecclesiastes 3:1-11 |
| 13 Matthew 19:13-15 | 29 Matthew 25:31-46 |
| 14 Psalm 40:1-10 | 30 Psalm 3:1-8 |
| 15 James 4:13-17 | 31 Romans 8:18-28 |
| 16 Luke 14:15-24 | |

FOR THE RECORD...

CGRM: (Tues., July 21)	19
Neighborhood Online Prayer Service (Wed., July 22)	16
Sunday School (Sun. July 26 - via Zoom)	27
Worship (July 26): 8:40am Drive In Worship Service	31
10:45am Online Facebook Page	212
Total Worship	259
Sunday Receipts Needed Per Week	\$18,362.35
Sunday Receipts for 7/26/20	\$12,730.00
Through July 27: Income \$499,392.32	Expenses \$514,915.64

This Sunday:

"We Will Not Neglect"
Nehemiah 10:32-37
Rev. Josh deSteiguer

OPPORTUNITIES

Sunday, August 2, 2020

8:40 Drive In Worship Service (East Parking Lot)
9:30 Adult Sunday School Classes (via Zoom)
10:45 Worship (Watch the Livestream on YouTube or
Facebook.com/FCCWF)
4:00 Romans Bible Study (Rm 310 & Zoom)
7:00 Youth (Grades 6-12) (Rm 403/Gym)

Monday, August 3, 2020

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

Tuesday, August 4, 2020

9:30 FCC Staff Meeting (Rm 310)
6:00 Executive Council Meeting (Fellowship Hall/Zoom)
6:30 Common Ground Recovery Ministries Support Groups
(Rm 304-308)

Wednesday, August 5, 2020

7:00 Elders' Breakfast (Fellowship Hall)
9:00 CCF Spanish (Rm 220)
7:00 Youth (Grades 6-12) (Zoom)

Thursday, August 6, 2020

6:00 College Bible Study (Rm 405)

Friday, August 7, 2020

9:00 CCF Music (Rm 220)
8:00 Cardboard Car Show & Drive In Movie (Parking Lot)

Sunday, August 9, 2020

8:40 Drive In Worship Service (East Parking Lot)
9:30 Adult Sunday School Classes (via Zoom)
10:45 Worship (Watch the Livestream on YouTube or
Facebook.com/FCCWF)
4:00 Romans Bible Study (Rm 310 & Zoom)
7:00 Youth (Grades 6-12) (Rm 403/Gym)

Monday, August 10, 2020

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

Tuesday, August 11, 2020

9:30 FCC Staff Meeting (Rm 310)
6:00 Membership Ministry Meeting (Rm 405/Zoom)
6:00 Property Ministry Meeting (Rm 310/Zoom)
6:00 Outreach Ministry Meeting (Fellowship Hall/Zoom)
6:30 Common Ground Recovery Ministries Support Groups
(Rm 304-308)
7:00 Worship Ministry Meeting (Sanctuary/Zoom)

Wednesday, August 12, 2020

7:00 Elders' Breakfast (Fellowship Hall)
9:00 CCF Spanish (Rm 220)
7:00 Youth (Grades 6-12) (Zoom)

Thursday, August 13, 2020

6:00 College Bible Study (Rm 405)

Friday, August 14, 2020

9:00 CCF Music (Rm 220)

SERVING SUNDAY

ELDERS

8/2: Andy Wilson, Sherry Tucker; Sandra Ross, Presiding
8/9: David Collins, Rick Appling; Kerry Roach, Presiding

DIACONATE DRIVE-IN SERVICE SETUP

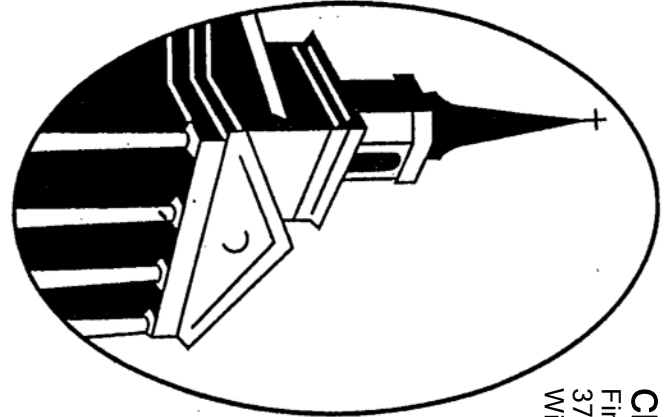
8/2: Jim LaValley &
8/9:

AUGUST 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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