

## Giveaway for MSU International Students

Once again we have the opportunity of welcoming new students to Wichita Falls and MSU by putting together baskets of items to help them get started. This year we will be partnering with First Presbyterian Church who has graciously accepted this opportunity with us. Some students will be in apartments and some in the dorms. MSU is anticipating a larger group of students this year. The giveaway will be Thursday, August 18<sup>th</sup>, after orientation. Baskets will be available to pick up in the office and fill later. Watch for more information to come as we receive it. If you have any questions, you may call Kim Ballard or Linda or Larry Carr. If you would like to start purchasing items for the baskets, the items needed are listed below. Thank you First Christian for your support.

Sheets: Dorm - twin long set

Apartment - queen set

Pan: Dorm - microwaveable bowl

Apartment - skillet or saucepan

Both Dorm & Apartment:

Towels - 1 large, 1 small, 1 washcloth

Blanket or throw

Large serving bowl

Dinner Plates - 2

Small Bowls - 2

Drinking Glasses - 2

Mugs - 2

Flatware - 2 each - fork, spoon, knife

Kitchen knife

Large spoon or spatula

Kitchen towel

Standard Pillow

Bath soap

Dish Detergent

Toothbrush

Toothpaste

## Join in VBS Family Night!



You are invited to join your church family and the families of our VBS participants for food, fun, and fellowship on Thursday, July 14, from 5:30 - 7:00 pm. There will be a variety of food trucks as well as ice cream and snow cones.

Come join in the fun and see what our VBS participants have experienced that week!

## The Challenger is Digital

The *Christian Challenger* has moved to a primarily digital format. The same news and information you've come to expect every two weeks is now being delivered to your email inbox. This new delivery format will enable you to receive this news in a timelier manner while also helping the church to be good stewards of its resources.



While the *Christian Challenger* has moved to a primarily digital format, we are still printing and mailing a small number of *Challengers* every two weeks. We know there are those who are homebound or who have no/limited access to the internet. These individuals will continue to receive a printed version in the mail.

To continue to make this transition as smooth as possible:

1. Make sure we have your current email address, and a current email address for every member of your family. Send an email to [mail@firstchristianwf.com](mailto:mail@firstchristianwf.com) with your name and preferred email address and we'll confirm that we have you on our mailing list.
2. Let us know if you have a family member or friend who still needs to receive a paper copy of the *Challenger* by mail. You can call the church office (940.692.2282) or email us ([mail@firstchristianwf.com](mailto:mail@firstchristianwf.com)) to make that note.



## We're Almost There – Serve This Summer at VBS!

We are just a few days away from VBS and almost all of our critical roles are filled. But there are still a few spots in which you can make a difference! Whether you can give an hour, a day, or the whole week, we can use your God-given gifts and presence to minister to the 153 kids who will call First Christian Church home next week. If you can be a part of this team, contact Claire Baer ([claire@firstchristianwf.com](mailto:claire@firstchristianwf.com), 940-692-2282).

# Make Your Mark

Dr. Mark R. Bender  
Senior Minister



*“who” right, they believed, and the “what’s” would follow, “rightly ordered.”*

*...[Yet,] on every moral, social, and political issue that I can think of, my progressive Christian friends and my traditional Christian friends have lined up on opposite sides. The legislative, judicial, electoral, and public policy developments that some of my Christian friends grieve, my other Christian friends celebrate. We sing the same hymns, say the same prayers, read the same Bible, go to the same Table to celebrate with thanksgiving the saving acts and presence of the same Christ. By and large, we’re clear and have some degree of consensus about the “who.” But...it’s the “what’s” that have us at such odds with one another these days. And what makes this so painful, and confusing for me is that I know just how consciously and conscientiously I arrive at my “what’s” with reference to my “who,” and I trust you do too. According to E. Stanley Jones [who said that if you ask a roomful of Christians what they think, they will divide a hundred different ways, but if you ask them who they trust, with one heart and voice they will answer Jesus Christ], that should be enough to assure concord.*

## A Lost Art (Part 1)

If you ever want proof that people can take sides about anything, just look at the comments made on a news story posted to social media.

When I scroll through Facebook, I often see posts made by our local news organizations. Some of these news stories feature “hot-button” issues or the actions of political figures. Right or wrong, I’ve come to expect sides to be drawn quickly on those types of news stories. But then there are other stories in which the consternation puzzles me. For example, just in the last few days, I’ve seen people choose sides on the flag being lowered to half-staff to honor the Highland Park shooting victims, the reports of the illegal use of fireworks in Wichita Falls, and even the resignation of our Chamber of Commerce President. It seems that nothing can go without comment.

Every time I see these comments, I think of a quote I used to see on a college football message board:

*Before the internet, the village idiot used to stay in his own village.*

And yet, when I say that or think that, I become part of the problem. I’ve branded the person who thinks differently than me an “idiot.”

Some of you remember taking a debate class in high school or college. One of the challenges we were given in that class was to take a position on a topic without regard to personal opinion or passion. Even if we were expected to *argue* (which is *giving reasons or citing evidence in support of an idea, action, or theory, with the aim of persuading others, NOT exchanging or expressing divergent or opposite views in a heated or angry way*) a position that differed from our own personal beliefs, what we learned was that there is more than one way to look at every issue. And since that is the case, it was good practice to understand the reasoning of both sides of every issue.

This seems to be a lost art these days. We are quick to filter every news story (or issue) through a “blue” or “red” lens, through a pro-life or pro-choice lens, through an originalist/strict constructionist or expansive/liberal constructionist lens, through a privileged or underprivileged lens, or through one of hundreds of other lenses. When we look at a particular matter through these lenses, we believe our viewpoint is the only correct one and we leave very little room to think otherwise. And whether you see it the same way becomes a litmus test for whether I will vote for you, work alongside you, or even talk with you when the family gets together for Thanksgiving.

This is the challenge of being in community with each other when we view matters through our political, economic, or social lenses in different ways. But what about when we view a matter through the lens of our faith differently than another? My friend Doug Skinner recently wrote about this challenge:

*I’m a minister and a member of a church that “has no creed but Christ.” In the divided church of their day (the opening years of the 19th century), our founders believed that if we just held to the essential affirmation that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and our Lord and Savior, that everything else would eventually sort itself out in love as we attended to the Apostles’ teaching together. Get the*



*My commitment to Christ has forced a whole set of other commitments, in fact, I’m not sure how real my commitment to Christ would really be if it wasn’t decisively shaping how I thought about abortion, gun violence, the border crisis, climate change, the equal protection of LGBTQ people under the law, the full inclusion of LGBTQ people in society, racism, war, and public health policies. But just as soon as I settle my convictions as a Christian on these matters, and start to act on them, I run head-on into your settled convictions as a Christian, and in many cases they clash. We are not of one mind or heart on many of the most important questions of the day. We agree on the “who,” but we disagree on the “what’s.”*

*When this happens, and it happens all the time these days, we are left with two choices. We can conclude that the other is not really a Christian, that their commitment to the “who” is not genuine because their approach to the “what’s” are so different from our own and walk away from each other. Or we can use our common confession of Christ as the basis of a commitment to stay in difficult community and deliberate conversation with one another when we disagree with one another on substantial and defining matters.*

In Part 2 (my next *Make Your Mark* column), I’ll talk more about some specific ways we as Christians can respectfully approach the fragmentation we see in society and among our sisters and brothers. But, for now, let me leave you with the question Harry Blamires asked in his book, *The Christian Mind*. What does it mean to think Christianly? When it comes to the fragmentation we see all around us, perhaps the best response to Blamires’ question is a response in which we sit down with those with whom we disagree, in humility (“I don’t know it all”) and with modesty (“I could be mistaken”), and reason together. In other words, we start by affording a “good faith assumption” to that other person, the presupposition that they are just as serious about God, and what’s right, and what’s good, and what’s true, as I am. The question is, can we do that?

Mark

# FCC MINISTRY NEWS AND CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

*celebrate  
with us*

**50 YEARS TOGETHER!**

*Larry and Linda Carr*

SUNDAY, JULY 24TH 2:00-4:00 PM

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
FELLOWSHIP HALL  
3701 TAFT BLVD.  
WICHITA FALLS, TX

GIVEN BY THE FAMILIES OF  
LARRY AND VICKIE CARR  
ROBERT AND MELANIE WEIR

*your presence is gift enough*

The **Challenger** is biweekly, with the next publication on July 20! FCC Ministry News is sent by email every Tuesday.

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

**New Testament in a Year:** Our next gathering to discuss the makeup of the New Testament and what we're reading will take place on Sundays, July 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, at 6:00 pm, in the Fellowship Hall and via Zoom.

**Pantry Sunday for Interfaith Outreach Services:** The July collected items will be jelly and cans of beans (such as pork 'n beans, pinto beans, etc., just not green beans).

You can continue to help keep the pantry shelves filled by: Donating the monthly items or any type of food items directly anytime into the large box on the porch by the Chapel entrance. If you would like to support Interfaith with a financial gift, you may mail your donation to Interfaith (1101 11th St., Wichita Falls, TX 76301), or donate on their website.

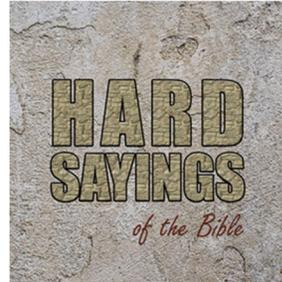
## Member News:

♥Hospitalized: at Kell West is Joan Stodghill.

Sundays at  
8:40 am | Chapel  
10:45 am | Sanctuary

*Teach*  
**US TO PRAY**

SUNDAYS AT 8:40 AM AND 10:45 AM



Wednesdays at  
*The Neighborhood*  
6:00 pm | Fellowship Hall



**Stretch Class**  
Is on Summer Break  
Until Wednesday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>

## Tech Team

Did you know that our weekly worship livestream in 2022 has been reaching an average of 77 families each week? That's 77 families that are connecting with First Christian Church for worship and spiritual growth. And you can be a part of the difference for these 77 families and many more.

Each week, members of First Christian Church assist with operating the sound board, running a camera, operating the in-Sanctuary displays, and directing the livestream. We even have online hosts - people who welcome guests to church online and monitor comments on Facebook and YouTube on behalf of the church. Almost all of these positions require little skill and our current tech team members would be glad to provide training.

Church strategist and blogger Carey Nieuwhof notes that *more people will access your ministry for the first time through a screen than through a facility*. He adds, *And unless you think they are second-rate people, then your online ministry can't be second-rate*.

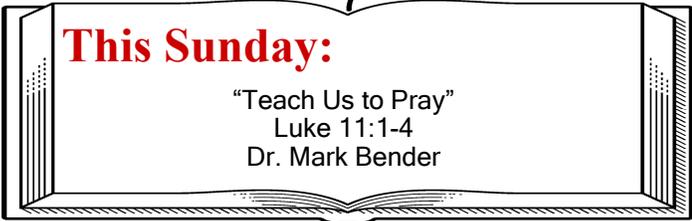
Interested in bringing the life-changing Gospel to people? Learn more about serving on our tech team by contacting Jerry Johnson or our Director of Media Ministry, Tim Williamson.

## FCC Swag Shop

Get outfitted with the latest FCC Swag! We've got t-shirts, polo shirts, denim shirts, button downs, and vests, with more on the way. Not only will you look good in this gear, it may provide an opportunity for you to share about First Christian Church in the community. You never know who will see your gear and

ask about it! Check out the online swag store on our website, [www.firstchristianwf.com/swag](http://www.firstchristianwf.com/swag), and order today!





# This Sunday:

“Teach Us to Pray”  
 Luke 11:1-4  
 Dr. Mark Bender

## OPPORTUNITIES

### Sunday, July 10, 2022

8:40 Worship (Chapel)  
 9:30 Sunday School / Journey Through Scripture  
 10:45 Worship (Sanctuary or Join the Livestream on YouTube or Facebook.com/FCCWF)

12:00 VBS Volunteers Meeting (Sanctuary)  
 3:00 Brooke's Site Team Meeting (Rm 310)  
 5:00 Youth Activities (Grades 6-12) (Rm 403/Gym)  
 6:00 Young Disciples (Grades K-5) (Rm 402/405)  
 6:00 New Testament Bible Study (Fellowship Hall / Zoom)

### Monday, July 11, 2022

7:30-6:00 Children Come First "CCF" (M-F)  
 9:00-12:00 Vacation Bible School (Gather in the Sanctuary)  
 5:30 ComTech Ministry Meeting (Rm 310)  
 7:30 Boy Scouts Troop 15 (Fellowship Hall)

### Tuesday, July 12, 2022

9:00-12:00 Vacation Bible School (Gather in the Sanctuary)  
 6:00 Property Ministry Meeting (Rm 310)  
 6:30 Common Ground Recovery Ministries "CGRM" Support Groups

### Wednesday, July 13, 2022

7:00 Elders' Breakfast (Rm 405)  
 9:00-12:00 Vacation Bible School (Gather in the Sanctuary)  
 3:00 Brooke's Site Team Meeting (Rm 310)  
 5:30 Brown Bag Fellowship (Fellowship Hall)  
 6:00 Neighborhood Worship Service (Fellowship Hall)  
 6:00 First Kidz (PreK-5th Grade) (Rm 402)  
 7:00 Youth Activities (Grades 6-12) (Rm 403/Gym)

### Thursday, July 14

9:00-12:00 Vacation Bible School (Gather in the Sanctuary)  
 5:30-7:00 Vacation Bible School Dinner & Program (Fellowship Hall)

### Friday, July 15, 2022

9:00 CCF Music (Rm 300)  
 12:00 CCF Parent Advisory Group Meeting (Rm 310)

### Sunday, July 17, 2022

8:40 Worship (Chapel)  
 9:30 Sunday School / Journey Through Scripture  
 10:45 Worship (Sanctuary or Join the Livestream on YouTube or Facebook.com/FCCWF)

5:00 Youth Activities (Grades 6-12) (Rm 403/Gym)  
 6:00 Young Disciples (Grades K-5) (Rm 402/405)  
 6:00 New Testament Bible Study (Fellowship Hall / Zoom)

### Monday, July 18, 2022

7:30-6:00 Children Come First "CCF" (W-F)  
 9:00 CCF Chapel (Chapel)  
 7:30 Boy Scouts Troop 15 (Fellowship Hall)

### Tuesday, July 19, 2022

10:00 FCC Staff Mtg / Worship Planning (Rm 310)  
 6:00 Stewardship Ministry Meeting (Rm 310)  
 6:30 Common Ground Recovery Ministries "CGRM" Support Groups

### Wednesday, July 20, 2022

7:00 Elders' Breakfast (Rm 405)  
 9:00 CCF Spanish (Rm 300)  
 5:30 Brown Bag Fellowship (Fellowship Hall)  
 6:00 Neighborhood Worship Service (Fellowship Hall)  
 6:00 First Kidz (PreK-5th Grade) (Rm 402)  
 7:00 Youth Activities (Grades 6-12) (Rm 403/Gym)

### Thursday, July 21, 2022

5:30-7:30 Youth Pool Party (Grades 6-12) (Kunkles, 4508 Weeks Park)

### Friday, July 22, 2022

9:00 CCF Music (Rm 300)

## SERVING SUNDAY ELDERS

7/10: Cheryl Smiley, Chris Showalter; Larry Spradley, Presiding  
 7/17: Cindy Hernandez, David Collins; Alan Freeman, Presiding

## JULY DIACONATE SERVERS

Maggy Anderson, Marc Cannedy, Leann Elder, Stacey Lingbeek, Julia Ward, Debi & Larry Ballard, Linda Gipson, Bob Hayes, LyDora Martin, Nancy Smith, Hailey Wineinger.

## DIACONATE SCHEDULED FOR COMMUNION PREPARATION

7/10: Linda Gipson & Bob Hayes 7/17: Leann Elder & Julia Ward

## DIACONATE SCHEDULED FOR COMMUNION VISITATION

7/10: Hailey Wineinger, Nancy Smith  
 7/17: Maggy Anderson, Leann Elder, Marc Cannedy

## 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
Brooke Reid, Director of Youth & Young Adults			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
Ashli Fischer, Director of Children Come First			687-2231
Alisa Gardner, Director of Young Ages School			692-3640
Elizabeth Ivey, Common Ground Recovery Ministries			337-1712
Susan Marrs, Executive Secretary		Tina Williams, Financial Secretary	
Karen Watson, Administrative Assistant		Debbie Watson, Organist	
Tim Williamson, Director of Digital Media			

## FOR THE RECORD . . .

CGRM: (Tues., June 28) . . . . .	8	
Neighborhood (Wed., June 29) . . . . .	40	
Sunday School (Sun. July 3) . . . . .	75	
Worship (July 3) : 8:40am Worship Service . . . . .	34	
10:45am Worship Service . . . . .	198	
Total Worship . . . . .	232	
Sunday Receipts Needed Per Week		\$21,040.06
Sunday Receipts for 7/3/22		\$5,418.75
Through July 5: Income \$465,851.63		Expenses \$65,768.46

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**FIRST**  
**CHRISTIAN**  
 WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS  
**CHRISTIAN CHALLENGER**  
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