



# Christian Challenger

Vol. 58

November 9, 2011

NO. 35

## "MANY GIFTS, ONE SPIRIT"

### Stewardship Campaign For 2012

We invite you to come as we celebrate God's blessings at either the Chapel or Sanctuary service and the congregational lunch on Commitment Sunday, November 20th.

Commitment Sunday is your opportunity to be part of the 2012 ministry through your presence and financial support. Be part of the many gifts and one spirit of our congregation at our morning worship services and then join us at 12:00 noon in the Fellowship Hall for a congregational lunch. Menu will be fried chicken, mashed potatoes, green beans, salad and dessert. Cost is by donation. Visitors and guests are always welcome. Please make your reservations in worship or by calling the church office, 692-2282.

## THANKSGIVING FELLOWSHIP DINNER

The November Fellowship Dinner will be on Wednesday, November 16th, at 6:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. The program will be the MSU Caribbean Pan Players. Menu will be ham, green beans, potatoes, rolls and dessert. Cost is by donation. Visitors and guests are always welcome. Please make your reservations in worship or by calling the church office, 692-2282.

## THANKSGIVING BASKETS

World Outreach Ministries has joined with Fain Elementary School (our P.I.E. partner) to provide Thanksgiving Baskets for Fain students. Our goal is 30 Thanksgiving Baskets. You may choose a grocery sack with a list of "side dishes" to put in the sack or you may choose an envelope to put in money to purchase the turkey. Most of the sacks and envelopes were taken on Sunday. However we still need 4 turkeys and 6 grocery bags of side dishes. Those items are available in the office. We hope that you will choose to participate in this project. If you have any questions contact Judy Muir or Diana Costello.

## CALLING ALL KNITTERS!

Join us for a couple hours of fun and fellowship as we learn or knit together each Thursday afternoon. We meet in the Parlor from 1:30-3:30 pm each week. If you want to learn how or are experienced, this is the place for you. Contact Debbi Schmidt (691-1929 or [debbims@sbcglobal.net](mailto:debbims@sbcglobal.net)) for more information.

*First Christian Church  
is proud to present*

## Joseph Martin in concert



November 13, at 8:45 am & 10:45 am in the Sanctuary  
and

November 13 at 2:00 pm in the Sanctuary  
Dedicating the new Sanctuary grand piano  
Featuring anthems sung by  
a combined choir from area churches

## JOURNEY THROUGH SCRIPTURE

There will be NO Journey Through Scripture on Sundays, November 13th & 20th. Journey Through Scripture will resume on Sunday, November 27th.

## This Sunday:

**8:45 & 10:45 Services:**

"Which Wedding Did You Go To?"  
Matthew 22:1-14 & Luke 14:16-24  
Dr. David B. Hartman Jr.

**5:14 CGRM Worship Service:**  
Melissa Ford

## Across Dave & Brett's Desks...

### Many Gifts, One Spirit

The weather this past year has been of Biblical proportions. In the summer, we had 100 straight days of 100+ degree heat, accompanied by a drought worse than the days of the Dust Bowl. The Weather Channel said we had the "Worst Summer of Any City in the United States," a title we may hold with a certain pride because it reaffirms the tenacity of our people. Last winter, of course, we had a major ice storm. Last night, our neighbors north of the Red River were beset, once again, by tornadoes. Last Saturday night, we experienced, of all things, an earthquake. As this is written, an asteroid the size of an aircraft carrier is hurtling in our direction, and is expected to pass between the earth and the moon tomorrow night. Astronomers say it will miss us by 200,000 miles, and if you are reading this, you will know they were right. But still...it's getting scary out there.

Then again, it's always been kind of scary "out there." It's scary, the Bible teaches, because the world is a fallen place. Of course, God still loves the world (cf. John 3.16), and as Christians we are called to love it, too; love it, but not trust it. But if the world cannot be trusted, what, or whom, can be? Psalm 46 says,

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.  
Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth should change,  
Though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea,  
Though its waters roar and foam,  
Though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit transforms Christian believers into the Body of Christ on this earth. Because of the Holy Spirit, we are capable of being more hopeful, more faithful, more loving and, yes, more trustworthy than we might ordinarily be. Scripture teaches what it means to be a part of that Body, teaches that each of us is of infinite value, because Christ died for us. Scripture also teaches that we are of near-infinite value for one another:

The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the hand to the feet, "I have no need of you"...now you are the Body of Christ and individually members of it. *1 Corinthians 12.15, 27*

This year's stewardship theme is "Many Gifts, One Spirit," from a passage in Ephesians:

...lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one Body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. *Ephesians 4.1-6*

Thank you for your loving gifts to the church, gifts of time and talent and offerings. We trust that we will

together, as the Body of Christ, provide for our church in the year to come. Consecration Sunday will be held on November 20, with a fellowship lunch to follow, and I hope that you will be able to join us.

Thank you again for your devotion to our church. It is an honor to share in ministry with you.

**Dave & Brett**

*Prayer: Almighty and loving God, we praise you for all good gifts. May our tithes and offerings be used in ways that are pleasing in your sight, for the service of your people and the upbuilding of your Church. In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.*

### ALL MINISTRIES MEETING NIGHT

Tuesday, November 15, 2011

Fellowship Hall

**5:45 pm** - The All Ministry Dinner for all Ministries.

In order to have enough food, **please** turn in your reservation to the church office, 692-2282, by noon Monday if you plan on eating.

**6:00 pm** - Ministry Meetings (for Christian Education, Evangelism, Membership, Property, Stewardship, World Outreach & Worship) **Begin**

### CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

The November CWF Luncheon will be on Monday, November 14, at 11:45 am in the Fellowship Hall. The program will be Judy Muir on "First Christian Church: What Are We Doing For Our Community?" The Service Offering for November will go to "CASA Adopt-A-Volunteer." Luncheon cost is \$5.00 per person, guests are welcome, and reservations are not required.

The CWF Board will meet in Room 12 at 10:30 am prior to the Luncheon.

### FROM THE MAILBOX...

The Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra invites seniors to join us at our rehearsals the Saturday afternoon of our performances: November 12, December 10, February 11, and March 24, from 1:30 to 4:00 pm at Memorial Auditorium. We realize that many seniors who no longer feel comfortable driving at night miss attending the concerts and truly do miss the orchestra. This is a wonderful opportunity for them to re-connect with their love of classical music. There is a nominal \$5.00 fee, payable at the door.

If you have any questions, contact Mark Francis, Executive Director, at 723-6202.

### CHILDREN COME FIRST FUNDRAISER

Please support the Children Come First fundraiser. CCF is selling items through a fundraising catalog through November 20th. A table will be set up in the church hallway. Funds raised will be used to purchase new cribs as mandated by the CPSC and to update the playground to meet updated fall zone requirements. Items will arrive no later than the week of December 19th.

## 2011 THANKSGIVING OFFERING RAISING UP SERVANT LEADERS

Disciples Seminary Foundation sponsored four students who traveled to Haiti in solidarity with our Global Ministries Church Partner CONASPEH. Jerri Handy, Lizzy Beach, Sharon Mann, and Lindsay Million were the first Disciples/UCC team to provide crisis relief for the earthquake-stricken country. In reflecting on the trip, DSF student Jerri Handy said, "I am so thankful to belong to a great Church who understands the need to respond with physical presence in times like these."

Danielle Cox, a student at Lynchburg College, spent two months studying in India through Lynchburg's international studies program. During her time in India, Danielle worked with the Hope Foundation teaching geography and English in the slums of Cheennai. "Because of my Disciples education, I understand my life work as vocation. I am now exploring seminary and God's call to ministry," Danielle shared.

These stories are among examples of how Disciples students are educated in a service-learning model. Your gifts to the 2011 Thanksgiving Offering support the care and nurture of servant leaders.

The Thanksgiving Offering benefits the colleges, universities, seminaries, and divinity houses affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). These learning communities are an extension of the church, challenging students to understand and respond to God's call to serve. Your support provides scholarships, church relations programs, and chaplaincy offices. ***Most importantly, your support of the 2011 Thanksgiving Offering, which will be received on Sundays, November 13th & 20th, helps Disciples raise up servant leaders!***

### MEMBER NEWS

♥**Hospitalized:** at Hospice is Paul Irwin; at Windmill Rehab is John Muir.

♥**Military Deployed:** are Wade Bouldin, son of Mike & Candy Bouldin & grandson of Betty Crane; Jim Collins, son of Diana & Doug Collins; Michael Jenks, husband of Michelle Jenks (former visitors); Jim Medley, husband of Wendy Medley; Jason Moen, brother-in-law of Karen & Mike Murdock; Bob Smyth, husband of Angela Smyth; Heath Guidry, husband of Megan Guidry and son-in-law of Angela & Bob Smyth; Christopher O'Francia, a Marine adopted by Dolly Sloan. Please keep them in your prayers.

♥Our sympathies are extended to Jane & Fred Ridenour & Family on learning of the death of Jane's mother, Nan Daniels, on November 2nd in Azle TX.

♥Congratulations to LeeAnn & Eric Stride on the birth of their son, Carter Stride, on November 6th. He weighed 6 lbs 7 ozs. and was 18 3/4 inches long. Proud grandparents are Joanne & Clyde Williford and great-grandmother is Ann Cocke.

♥Nancy Grimes invites everyone to come see her son, Gant as "Joseph", in the musical Joseph & The Technicolor Dreamcoat" this Sunday, November 13th, at 5:00 pm at First United Methodist Church in the Sanctuary. Admission is free.

*We want to be as inclusive as possible with our Member News, so if you know about an honor someone received, an important event in someone's life, or about illness or death, please call the church-692-2282. Thanks!*



- **Check In** every Wednesday from 6:30-8:30 in the gym. Grades 6-12. This is a time to "check in" with one another in the middle of the week. Games, chill time, worship, and communion. Come support each other as we continue to do life together.
- **The Life** meets every Sunday from 6-8 in the gym. Grades 6-12. Join us for a time of fun, fellowship, worship, and discipleship. We will have gathering worship, then break into small groups for deeper discussion and learning, then come back together for fellowship and communion.
- **CYF Fall Rally** is November 18-20 @ LBCR for grades 9-12.

### JOIN BLAST FOR A MISSION PROJECT!

This Sunday, November 13<sup>th</sup> we will go to the Dollar Tree to buy supplies and then deliver them to the Children's Home. We will leave at 5:00. **Please invite your parents to join us!** We will return at 6:15.

**Please bring \$5.00** to help purchase the requested supplies (personal care and hygiene items such as lip gloss, lotion, hair gel, boy's body spray, deodorant, etc.).

**The Children's Home** serves children ages 2 through 17. The Children's Home accepts primarily court ordered placements through Child Protective Services (CPS). Admission to the shelter is generally the result of abuse, neglect, and abandonment sustained in the home.

Please call Catherine (692-2282) if you have any questions. I'll see you there!!!!!!!

### Sunday School Schedule

Children's Sunday School at 9:30 a.m.

**3 - 5 year olds meet in room 6**

**K - 2<sup>nd</sup> grade meet in room 15A**

**3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> grade meet in room 15B**

### SUNDAY NIGHT YOUTH GROUPS & CHOIRS

3:00 – Chancel Ringers (Grades 9-adults) (Stratten Hall)

4:15 – B.L.A.S.T. Choir (Grades K-5) (Rm 10)

5:00 – B.L.A.S.T. Youth Group (Grades K-5) (Rm A2)

6:00 – The Life (Grades 6-12) (Rm A3)

*Take advantage of and enjoy your First Christian Church Library and its contents any time the church building is open.*

## **JERRY JOHNSON'S STEWARDSHIP MOMENT FROM SUNDAY – NOVEMBER 6TH**

Howdy !!!

I know what you're thinking – and you're right...if this guy's getting up to talk on this first Sunday in November...then stewardship Sunday's 2-weeks away – and it is. On Sunday – November 20<sup>th</sup>, we'll again make our financial commitment to next year's church needs

Then we'll all stroll down to fellowship hall for a free fried chicken lunch with all the traditional church lunch fixins...please make your reservations in the church office before Tuesday, November 15th

This morning, I'm just the warm-up act with my long-lost twin brother Paul Johnson bringing you the pep-talk in about 30-minutes...remember forever that he's the guy that spoke on the morning after our earthquake

Here's a hand-full of facts for you to ponder in the mean-time

- 1) This year's total budget of \$830-thousand is the second biggest in the history of our church
- 2) Your total pledges make up \$692-thousand make up 83% of that budget
- 3) 202 or about 70% of our active church members make a financial commitment
- 4) Those total pledges represent a 2% increase over the previous year's total pledges
- 5) And finally...your financial commitments support 7-departmental ministries, 3-auxiliary church programs, a world-famous church staff and count-less other special needs and special projects

This Sunday, we've got a special speaker...next Sunday, we've got special music... and on stewardship Sunday, we'll hear from Dave on his vision for our church's 2012 ministries

Each week, you'll find instant replays of the previous Sunday's stewardship information in the challenger...and later on this week, you'll receive your 2012 commitment card in the mail

Between now and when you make your commitment...please give prayerful consideration to your 2012 gift...and give until it feels good

As usual, we also ask that you consider your ability to "GROW-ONE" again this year...that's your consideration to increase your commitment by one-percent of your annual income – if you're at 5-percent, grow one to 6-percent...if you're at 7-percent, grow one to 8-percent...and if you're at 9-percent, grow one to 10-percent

In advance, thank you for your support

“WHAT ARE YOU PREPARED TO DO ???” - Exodus 35:30-36:7

In our scripture this morning we find the people of Israel building the first Sanctuary. Actually it's kind of a tent. Still it is an important event in our understanding of God and in our gaining a stronger relationship with God. When God commands Moses to build a tabernacle for the holy of holies, it was life changing.

Prior to the building of the tabernacle, the people saw God as a magician. A God who made things magically happen: Manna from heaven, water from a rock, the seas parting for their safe passage. But from this point in Exodus, God is understood to be a God worthy of worship and praise and the role of the people was to be faithful and to be stewards of God's world.

What I find engaging about this scripture is how Moses handles the task. According to God's command Moses told people to bring a freewill offering to the Lord. Everyone who was willing brought an offering of gold, silver or yarns and fine linen. Some people brought jewelry and ornaments. They all presented their gifts as a love offering to the Lord. The people did not have much to give after years of captivity as slaves in Egypt. Slavery has never been a high paying job. Remember this is also after they had given most of their gold to build an idol of a calf that was destroyed. So resources were scarce, possibly more scarce than in our modern recession.

Next Moses chose skilled people to build the tabernacle, to create artistic works and to engage in all kinds of artistic craftsmanship; Moses chose a leader for all these skilled men. His name was Bezalel. He was like the chairperson of the Building Committee. Bezalel was a person who was filled with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge & leadership. The Bible gives us details about his background. He was the son of Uri and grandson of Hur and belonged to the tribe of Judah. This lineage tells us that he was a well-respected person and that his skills would honor God. He was no low bid contractor.

Our passage is pretty realistic in the recognition that building or renovating a church requires strategy and stewardship of time, money and talents. Church is not built, maintained, and grown naturally or magically. To build and maintain church requires our stewardship. Stewardship is our response to our thankfulness for God's provision and for God's forgiving love. Stewardship requires a radical change in our hearts and attitude. The people who built the tabernacle with their freewill offerings were the same people who complained to Moses about their need for bread, meat and water. They almost killed Moses with anger and frustration. Now they sacrifice because they have grown in their faith and their understanding of the greatness of God.

Of course what I like best about this passage is the last part when Moses has to order the people to stop giving to the project because they absolutely can't find a way to use any more gifts. That's the story that I hope you repeat here this month. Wouldn't it be cool to hear David announce in December that we have oversubscribed our plans for next year and then ask folks to hold back giving any more to the church until we can figure out what to do with all we have?

What an exciting scene this Exodus passage gives us. People became so generous. The people became believers with new hearts and a new spirit, fresh as new creation. New hearts and spirits are the starting point of our generosity. Until we have them we cannot be truly generous people. Do you review God's provisions and blessings in your life, family and faith journey? Or do you just complain about what you don't have and complain how others waste our precious resources? Have you ever asked for and experienced God's forgiveness? Have you ever thanked God for your life and your children's lives as a pure gift from God? Have you grown in your faith this last year? That is the question. No I'm not saying the only way to grow in your faith is by giving money

The culture of our world does not concern itself about where the gift of life comes from. Most of us consider our lives and our resources are a product of our own sweat and talents. We are the center of the world because, without us, there would be nothing. We need more -- we want more. When we are filled with these cultural desires, we cannot be generous people. We cannot be renewed as God's people who are thankful for God's bounty. We cannot be true Disciples of Christ who gather in God's house for prayer and worship and scatter into the world for mission and ministry. That's what this scripture is all about. We are called to rekindle the spirit that Moses encountered when the first Sanctuary was being built.

I know all of you have figured out by now that I am that “big out-a-town Jasper in the pinch-back suit, talk 'n about horseshoe gambling, the sins of playing pool and surely all this church needs is a boy's band.” Yes, I've been invited in to stir up the congregation to give generously to this year's stewardship drive. So you can unfold your arms and relax now. It's out of the closet. Yep, I'm the one. Whew. Oh, by the way, yes, this is the “Sermon on the Amount”. Now, here is the deal. You might ponder, why should I listen? Curiosity may be enough reason to listen. BUT here is another possibility - it could change your life. And if nothing else ask yourself - why am I here today? You could have stayed home and slept in. I believe you are here today because you want to be a generous giver. You come to worship a God to whom you want to be faithful.

What I hope to accomplish this morning is to offer you the possibility of doing something that will grow your faith and let you really feel closer to God. In my view of the world, that's why we are here. God created the heavens and the earth and us for just that

purpose. God calls us to be stewards of the earth, to watch over and nurture this place. And we have been fighting that call ever since that nasty snake tempted us with just one juicy apple. Jesus commanded Paul to feed his sheep – not fleece his sheep. God does not need your money. This church does not need your money. You, however, need to give your money to this church. If that sounds confusing and illogical, let me clarify for you because it's not only counter intuitive but it's extremely counter cultural.

Now there are some of you who are still awake and thinking "who is this clown? Doesn't he know we're in a recession?" I am here to tell you that there is no place for recessions in God's plan for us. Governments have recessions. Economies have recessions. My 401K has recessions. But God's love for us and God's providing for us is completely recession proof. God provides each of us with all that we need. Please hear what I said "God provides us with all we need not all we want". This is not a Prosperity Gospel for church members only. The folks with Moses knew that. God had provided for them from the time they left Egypt. Well, OK, how is God providing for me now? Where are my mortgage payments going to come from? Where is the food and the medical care I need (or may need) going to come from? The lessons God keeps trying to teach us are that we have an ABUNDANT GOD! A God who loves us and gives us gifts, talents and skills that can turn the meager things we have into enough for us and more than enough for everyone. The distinction is that GOD gave you the ability to do and take care of whatever you have. You have free-will to piddle that away on lesser things or you can use it to take care of God's kingdom and deepen your understanding of God. I know that many of you feel like you are sacrificing, struggling to continue to give what you are already giving to the church and others. I think this is really about growing in your faith – strengthening your relationship with God. Trust me; in the history of Christendom no one has ever tithed themselves into bankruptcy.

Tithing means giving a percentage of your income and wealth to God's work. TEN percent is the number we discuss. And I can tell you that 10% is a good place to start. I know folks who are reverse tithers. They give away 90% of what they have and live on 10%. Some of you will find that the Modern Tithe is a concept that might be helpful. The Modern Tithe suggests that you give 5% to your church and 5% to other good causes. If the 300 potential giving units of this church were to be tithers, the church budget would be about 2.2 million dollars per year. A modern tithing church would have a budget of 1.1 million. Now before you start debating my methodology or explaining that your incomes are way below average, hear me. You can do this. Really the only question is...DO YOU WANT TO? What are you prepared to do?

One of my wife's favorite movie stars is Sean Connery. I tease her about him by calling him oatmeal. That's because I claim that she would watch Sean sitting at a table and slowly eating oatmeal for two hours and rave about his performance. In the classic movie "The Untouchables", Sean plays the role of an honest Irish beat cop and who lectures the young Elliot Ness (Kevin Costner) about his failure to arrest and jail Al Capone. He continues to push Costner with the line "What are YOU prepared to do?" That is a very good question when it comes to your faith and this church. What are YOU prepared to do?

I would argue that the answer to that question is at the core of your decision of how to be faithful to the love of God. It is extremely hard to get to a positive place with this while living in our culture within the social morays of our secular world. We are driven to consume. I do not think that it's a coincidence that one of the most seductive, consumer driven, modern companies is called Apple. The iPad, iPhone, iPod, iTouch. I, I, I, I, until we really believe that we NEED one. I just don't want it -- I need it. It drives us and it is not faithful. If you are in trouble financially - get yourself right. Listen to Dave Ramsey or others but – get yourself right so you can give.

Some of you are retired and living on what is often referred to as "Fixed Income". You just can't give any more. Well, if you are already tithing, you may be at peace with yourself. But I want you to ask yourself this question "If I really want something that I can't afford out of my fixed income, what do I do?" Senior adults travel around a ton; far more than any other age group in our society. How do they pay for these trips since they are barely surviving on fixed incomes? Well, they cash something in. That is what we refer to as wealth. Wealth is a term we use to refer to someone else's money. No one refers to their own wealth, we call that savings. It's our savings in our IRA's. Well many of you know that there is a law that requires a mandatory drawdown of IRA funds. That drawdown is income. If you donate those funds, not only can you do something positive for God's work but you don't have to pay taxes on that income.

Our faithful living also calls us to be good stewards with all that has been given to us. I believe that includes our "estate". If you have not left this church something in your will, please consider tithing your estate or more. It will be an act that really affirms your commitment to what God has done for you here.

You may be saying "How can I get to this kind of commitment, to being a steward?" Forget the legalism of tithing; it may be holding you back instead of helping. Let me tell you a true story about giving. The pure JOY of giving.

There is a member of a church who lives in an assisted living center. Folks kept noticing that she was becoming frailer and frailer. She wasn't eating enough. The center's social worker kept working with her, trying to convince her that she needed to sign up for the meal plan. The woman adamantly refused. She said it was taking most of her resources to pay her rent and buy her medicines. The

meal plan would mean that she would have no money left. That meant she would have to stop giving to the church and she absolutely would not do that. She'd rather die first. Now she understands God's call and her joy in giving.

This woman goes to church most Sundays and she rides in a church bus that picks her up at the center. Each week four church members take turns driving the bus. The drivers also kept noticing her decline. So they came to the pastor asking that she check up on what was happening. Well, when the four drivers heard her story, they got together and agreed to each increase their giving to the church by \$100 per month so that the church could anonymously scholarship the woman's the meal plan. They would make up the difference so she could eat. She is still in church, in much better health and still joyful about being part of a faith community and being able to give to her church.

Would you do that? Would you sacrifice to the extent she did or would you sacrifice to help in this situation? I think most of us want to act like that. Well, what is stopping you? This is what you are being asked to do in a couple of weeks. People tell me that this kind of story isn't the same as pledging to the church. They tell me "I'd give to that woman and already do with other good causes in our community. But giving to the church budget doesn't feel the same". But really it is just the same. No one wants to give money to stock the toilet paper in the bathrooms; we all want our gift to go to the hungry woman. But when we come together to give, to honor God and to go and do ministry, we give meaning to our faith. We give reality to God.

The other struggle in our role as stewards is that we understand "we are called to give our time, talent and resources" to maintain God's world. This is a concept that Jesus attests to strongly. The problem is in the little words. We all too often make the mistake of inserting the word "or" in between these words and not the correct conjunction which is "and". I'm not sure how this happens to us, but Jesus is very clear about this. To the rich young ruler he says give away everything and follow him.

Mostly it's about money. Our culture has made money such a scarcity issue that we are constantly focusing more on me than we do on others. Will I run out of money before I die? What if my business tanks? What if I lose my job? What if I can't pay my bills? We are all in the process of learning to trust God. I do not doubt for a minute that everyone in this room wants to be a generous giver. Everyone wants to leave a legacy of generosity and be able to take pride in that. There is another stewardship speaker who asks everyone in the room to take out their check book or wallet and pass it to the person in the row behind them and then he announces that we will now receive the morning offering. Give like its someone else's money because theologically it is. Ridding ourselves of the chains that bind our faith is a very joyous experience. It is a freedom which truly "passes all understanding".

Here are four quick ideas that you might consider in freeing yourself for giving.

- 1) **Test drive the tithe...Many of us are not tithers because we fear that we will starve. I mean it. Pick a month. In that month figure out how much a tithe should be and give it. At the end of the month sit down and list what you did not do that felt like deprivation. I believe you will surprise yourself.**
- 2) **Make a conscious decision to stop doing something that you talk about as a "NEED" but really know it's a luxury, something that you would gladly trade to see a starving person eat...Give that as a gift to God. Make it something which you can see with direct results. Starbucks comes to mind. Or going out to dinner after church. Mark your calendar with a date to prayerfully evaluate how this makes you feel.**
- 3) **Pledge an amount that you are not sure you can give...Be counter cultural and you will surprise yourself. And if you fail? It's a ton better than never trying. There is no penalty for failure to be more generous than you think you can be.**
- 4) **IF you are not a pledger currently, make a commitment...Remember no church member has ever pledged themselves into bankruptcy. Even if you are living on food stamps and sleeping in a cardboard box under the freeway, commit to giving something.**

And most of all pray earnestly for discernment. Even if you usually don't pray outside this room, I beg you to pray every day for the next two weeks for God to speak to you about how you can be faithful. The theme for this year's campaign is "Many Gifts - One Spirit." I would ask you to be like the people of the tribe who brought their gifts to the temple with a joyful, willing spirit to further God's kingdom.

I have asked David to call me and let me know when he is going to make that announcement "STOP GIVING" we can't keep up with all of the ministries you have funded.

What are YOU prepared to do? Amen.

## SERVING SUNDAY

Jim Hay, Eddie Tucker, Tres Ward, Presiding  
**DIACONATE COMMUNION VISITATION**

Ashley Barker, LaVeta Kaiser, Caitlin Hartman  
**NOVEMBER DIACONATE SERVERS**

Ashley & Richard Barker, Mary Carlton, Caitlin Hartman, Melanie Hernandez, Melody Jennings, Andrew & Randy Long, Greg Mitchell, Ben & Sheila Reynolds, Abby & Kay Sabine, Angela & Bob Smyth, Curtis Sullivan, Joye Thompson, Alice & Mark Vallejo, Angela Vallejo.

## SUNDAY ELDER COMMUNION VISITATION

The Elders will be happy to take communion to anyone who can't come to the worship service. Call the church office and your name will be added to our list.

## OPPORTUNITIES

Sunday, November 13, 2011

THANKSGIVING OFFERING

8:45 Worship (Sanctuary)

9:30 Sunday School

NO Journey Through Scripture (Parlor)

10:45 Worship (Sanctuary)

2:00 Joseph Martin Concert (Sanctuary)

3:00 Reception for Joseph Martin (Parlor)

4:15 BLAST Choir (Grades K-5) (Rm 10)

5:00 BLAST Youth Group (Grades K-5) (Rm A2)

5:00 Chancel Ringers (Grades 9-Adults) (Stratten Hall)

5:14 Recovery Ministries Worship Service (Fellowship Hall)

6:00 The Life (Grades 6-12) (Rm A3 & Gym)

6:00 Family Challenges Support Group (Rm 12)

6:00 Alcohol & Substance Abuse Recovery Group (Rm 16)

6:00 Women's C.A.R.E. Group (Rm 17)

6:00 Anger Recovery Group (Rm 19)

7:00 Recovery Groups Dinner (Fellowship Hall)

Monday, November 14, 2011

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

9:00-11:45 Young Ages School (M-F)

10:15 Staff Meeting (Office)

10:30 CWF Board Mtg (Rm 12)

11:45 CWF Luncheon (Fellowship Hall)

7:30 Boy Scouts Troop 15 (Fellowship Hall)

Tuesday, November 15, 2011

2:00 Library Cmte (Library)

4:00 Encore Choir (Stratten Hall)

5:45 All Ministries Dinner (Fellowship Hall)

6:00 All Ministries Meetings (Fellowship Hall)

Wednesday, November 16, 2011

7:00am Elders' Breakfast (Rm A1/Chapel)

9:30 Encore Choir (Stratten Hall)

11:30 Women's Bible Study (Rm 12)

5:30 Respite Service (Chapel)

6:00 Thanksgiving Fellowship Dinner (Fellowship Hall)

6:30 Check-In (Grades 6-12) (Rm A3 & Gym)

7:30 Chancel Choir (Grade 9-Adults) (Stratten Hall)

Thursday, November 17, 2011

9:00 CWF Group 3 Birthday Breakfast (Highway Café)

1:30-3:30 Knitting Group (Parlor)

Friday, November 18, 2011

5:00 Leave for CYF Rally (Nov. 18-20) (LBCR)

## THE CHURCH STAFF . . .

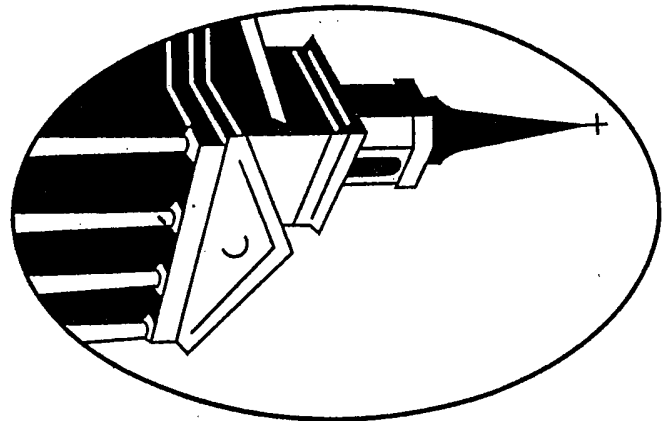
Dr. David Hartman, Senior Minister  
 Rev. Brett W. Coe, Associate Minister  
 Jeanette Showalter, Director of Music Ministries  
 Rev. Dave Brummett, Director of Recovery Ministries  
 Julie Coe, Director of Membership Ministries  
 Catherine Earley, Children's Ministries & CCF  
 Valorie Massey, Young Ages School  
 Cheryl Appling, Business Administrator  
 Susan Marrs, Executive Secretary  
 Pam Poulos, Receptionist  
 Church Number 940-692-2282  
 Church e-mail: susan@firstchristianwichitafalls.org  
 Web Page: www.firstchristianwichitafalls.org

Home Phone Number:

704-5099  
 704-5856  
 763-8515  
 613-2112  
 447-6475  
 720-2665  
 692-3640  
 691-7265  
 Sherry Nelson, Financial Secretary  
 Debbie Watson, Organist  
 FAX Number 940-696-3085

## FOR THE RECORD . . .

Church School . . . . .	156	
8:45 Worship . . . 50		10:45 Worship . . . 222
5:00 CGRM Worship Service . . . . .	32	
Total Worship . . . . .	304	
Sunday Receipts Needed Per Week		\$15,956.24
Sunday Receipts for 11/6/11		\$16,414.15
Through Oct.: Income \$644,583.05		Expenses \$666,560.20



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

THE CHRISTIAN CHALLENGER  
 Pub. No. (USPS 559-820). Published weekly during the school year with exception the last week in December, & in June & July 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.

*The Meeting Place*

*A place for everyone between services*

*A place for sharing love within the family*

Coffee is available for everyone in the hallway.

Get your first cup with us!

Running late to class or early to church?