



FORT SMITH DISCIPLE

July 21, 2021

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Number 3

“Humans in and out of Covenant”

¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?’” ²The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; ³but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.’” ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not die; ⁵for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves. ⁸ They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

Genesis 3:1-8

August Dates for Volunteer Work at Hope Campus

We have two dates for the opportunity to prepare and serve meals at Hope Campus. The first date is **Monday, August 9**, for LUNCH from 9:30-12:30. The second date is **Sunday, August 15**, for the EVENING MEAL from 4:00-7:00. The Hope Campus Chef will be there to lead us, and the menu and food will be provided.

To sign up, contact Ginger Jefferies 414-2466 or the Church Office. There will also be sign-up sheets in the narthex.

We will be collecting baseball caps, disposable razors, and travel-size shaving cream during the month of July.

We are skipping forward from Genesis 1 to Genesis 3 this week to look at the second creation story in the Bible. But, as we do, let's briefly recap this second story that spans Genesis 2 and 3. It begins with God introducing Adam (Hebrew for man) to the world and all its amazing vegetation, to all the animals that he gets to name, and to Eve (Hebrew for life or enlivening one). Adam and Eve, I'm sure, for a while loved this life of simplicity. They remained in a covenantal relationship with God, letting God order their steps and enjoy creation. Just the same, they cared for one another and looked over the garden and all its inhabitants.

But, then Eve saw a serpent. It told her that humans ought to be like God, able to contemplate all of good and evil. One thing led to another, and they took the serpent up on it. Their eyes were opened. I imagine they spent days thinking and talking about all their newfound knowledge.

And then they heard God seeking them out. They hid. They were ashamed of themselves and covered themselves up. When God found them, it panged God's heart to see what had come of them. As John Milton writes in *Paradise Lost*, "For so I created them free and free they must remain." Though God loved them, they were immature and lost people. So, God told them that they must be taken from the Garden of Eden out of fear that they would also eat the fruit of the tree that gives eternal life. God would not permit them into eternity only to have them destroy others and self destruct.

God led them out the gate of the garden. He told them of the woes they will face apart from His presence. There will be hard work, pulling up the harvest through thick weeds and thorns. There will be pain in childbearing and enmity between the man and the woman. But, God also said that there will come a day when a human, a seed from the woman, will strike the head of the serpent, our ancient foe, and return us to God anew. Adam and Eve listened attentively as they reached the other side of the gate. Then, they looked over all the world we now live in. But, as they looked back, it seemed as though God was nowhere to be found. Now, it was their turn to make use of the knowledge of good and evil to oversee all things in creation.

Nick

Our plan for COVID going forward:

While so many of us are looking forward to more opportunities to open up, only about 22% of Sebastian County is fully vaccinated. The fully vaccinated population percentages in the areas surrounding Fort Smith in adjacent counties is about the same. There is much discussion on what the covid variant now circulating in our region will mean to us since we lack "herd immunity." The Board approved the formation of a committee, with members having experience in the health care profession as well as representation from a cross-section of the congregation, to serve as advisors on developing data and the forming of appropriate response plans. But while that is happening, I want to share with you the overarching guidelines of our current plan:

1. We are going to reopen a little slower than many of us would like. Our priority as Christians in this situation is to care for our neighbors and especially those most in need. While we do not want to move too slow here, we especially do not want to move too fast.
2. Expect any changes to be communicated here, on our website, and from the pulpit. We are all cautiously optimistic as we look to the time when all our neighbors will have a reasonable chance to be safe from this virus. Until that time, please review our current plan; with copies online, at the office, and on the tables as you enter the narthex.
3. As the time comes for us to open back up some more, look forward to more fellowship, more service, and more "just fun" events. Once we get the go ahead, we will hit hard to bring back some well-needed community. Thank you for your willingness to walk with us through this unprecedented time. We are looking forward to what's next but do not want to declare victory until we are truly ready.

Upgrade Purchase

The current audio speakers in the sanctuary are over 35 years old and are showing signs of performance loss due to age. In response to complaints received about the inability to clearly hear persons from the pulpit or the communion table, the trustees and property ministry asked David Craine, of Diversified Audio, to review our audio speaker system and recommend solutions. David is recognized as an expert in this field, specializing in church audio systems, and has worked on our system over the past 40 or more years. After a survey of our system, he found that the acoustics in the sanctuary were changing and resulting in increased reverberation. The best solution was to upgrade to speakers to ones with newer technology and have a greater ability to tightly focus the sound onto the pews. This would eliminate the sound which the current speakers now cannot control and bounces off the Sanctuary's upper windows and wood surfaces above the lower windows.

This project was not placed in the approved 2021-2022 budget because it was not fully defined at the time the budgeting process was undertaken. The trustees and property ministry chairperson submitted Diversified Audio's speaker upgrade cost proposal of \$10,489.91 to the Board for consideration at their July 17 meeting. The presentation to the Board was to use trustee funding for initial purchase and installation costs as a loan and to initiate a capital fund drive to reimburse that loan.

The Board approved the speaker upgrade proposal and Diversified Audio was authorized to begin the purchasing process. Currently, manufacturers and suppliers are still recovering from supply chain interruptions due to the covid pandemic, and it is anticipated that it may be as long as four to six months to receive the equipment.

The capital plan will be rolled out in the near future. In the meanwhile, you may make contributions to this project by noting on the check memo line or on the outside of the envelope that the enclosed gift is for the "speaker upgrade" or "speaker replacement."

Help Needed

I need five good strong men to help me move and reattach the cabinets in the Children's Building that were moved to clear the water. Plan for this coming Saturday morning at 9:00 am. Call or text me at 479-650-1755 to let me know if you will be there. Thanks.

Hardie Jefferies

Bill & Jette Lindsay Scholarship

The trustees will offer scholarship money to any student that will be enrolled in college this coming spring semester. Contact the church office for a form or print the scholarship form attached to this email and return it to the church **by Sunday, August 4.**

In the Life of the Church

- **Sunday, July 25, following worship service:** Elders' Meeting
- **Sunday, July 25, 6:00 pm:** Beer & Hymns
- **Lunch Bunch, July 27, 11:30 am,** Taste and See, 1402 S. Waldron. Call or text Dave Pulliam, 479.650.4101.

Dianna's Notes

July 25 Mary Beth Oliver
August 1 Vocal Duet: Linda Creekmore & Dianna Jackson
 Bell Trio: Randy Alexander, Betsy Kirby, Margot Mundy
August 8 Bell Solo: Becki Struble

Prayer Concerns

- ◆ Continue to remember **Lesley Fleming**.
- ◆ Keep **Mona Jo Fisher** in your prayers. Her address is 730 Powderhorn Circle, Van Buren, AR 72956.

For the Record July 18, 2021		Elder for July Ruth Carson—479-629-3029	
Operating Receipts	\$ 6,492.00	<p>First Christian Church 3501 Rogers Avenue Fort Smith, Arkansas 72903</p> <p>Office: (479) 783-1139</p> <p>Office Hours 9:00am-3:00pm Monday-Thursday</p> <p>Service Times Sunday School at 9am Worship at 10am</p> <p>Church Staff</p> <p>Rev. Nick Koontz, Senior Minister Dianna Jackson, Director of Music Ministry Mary Beth Oliver, Organist Barbara Brown, Secretary Pam Shelby, Financial Secretary Randy Alexander, Custodian Lesley Fleming, Nursery Attendant Rev. Howard Marshall, Pastor Emeritus Rev. Randy Jay, Pastor Emeritus</p>	
To Date	17,427.45		
Endowment			
To Date			
Monthly Budgeted Needs	\$25,487.98		
Mission Statement			
<p>The mission of First Christian Church, Fort Smith, Arkansas is to lift up Jesus the Christ by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling spiritual growth and deepened commitment, both individually and corporately; • Developing a church family/community that is accepting and encouraging; • Serving our community and the world through spiritual, physical, and emotional support; and, • Reaching out in His name to the unchurched in our community. 			
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