



FORT SMITH DISCIPLE

July 28, 2021

Volume 59

Number 4

“Rugged Individualism in the Flood”

⁹These are the descendants of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation; Noah walked with God. ¹⁰And Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. ¹¹Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹²And God saw that the earth was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted its ways upon the earth. ¹³And God said to Noah, “I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence because of them; now I am going to destroy them along with the earth. ¹⁴Make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. ¹⁵This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. ¹⁶Make a roof for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above; and put the door of the ark in its side; make it with lower, second, and third decks. ¹⁷For my part, I am going to bring a flood of waters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die. ¹⁸But I will establish my covenant with you; and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you. ¹⁹And of every living thing, of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. ²⁰Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground according to its kind, two of every kind shall come in to you, to keep them alive. ²¹Also take with you every kind of food that is eaten, and store it up; and it shall serve as food for you and for them.” ²²Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.

[Genesis 6:9-22NRSV](#)

We have two more Sundays in our series on the beginning of the Bible, this one and the tower of Babel. What is perplexing in the story of Noah's ark is that no one seems to agree on what this story is about. A professor of mine even participated in a study on how Noah's ark has historically been portrayed in children's bibles. During puritan times, the children's bibles told the story with an emphasis on all the lost souls who inevitably will face destruction. Next, the story I'm betting most of us are familiar with is the story of God's promises to those that follow Him. However, now, children's bibles prefer just to point out all the different animals and to show God's creativity in making them.

However, I want to throw my hat in the ring on interpretations of Noah's ark. As far as I can tell, this and the tower of Babel show us two bookends of poor ways of operating in the world that we all too often employ. Here, it is apparent that all the other folks around Noah were nihilists. They didn't care to believe in or follow anything outside themselves. This way of being, nihilistic and propping ourselves up as rugged individuals does not last in times of tragedy. Let's explore this story through that lens and see where God leads us.

Looking forward to Sunday. These last two sermons will serve as bad examples, giving us lessons which point us to Christ.

[Nick](#)

The CDC has reversed course and is now asking folks, vaccinated and unvaccinated, in high virus transmission areas (ie: Fort Smith and the surrounding counties) to wear masks while in large gatherings indoors (ie: church services). As of the publication of this newsletter, further guidance is sparse. **As we wait on more guidance, I want to encourage you all to wear a mask even if you are sitting in the relaxed social distancing section of the sanctuary.**

I'm sure many of you feel, as I do, a mix of whiplash and continued concern for those most at risk in our community. To be really candid, I am very frustrated with all the COVID red tape, that more is being asked of those already vaccinated, and that I'll be wearing a mask in this heat. However, I am also aware that our hospitals are beginning to fill up very quickly once again, that breakthrough transmissions are occurring, and that we still have a responsibility to our neighbors.

We are combating an evolving virus. In doing so, the best we can do is respond in a timely and appropriate manner to the data that comes our way. But, as we do, I want to share a priority of mine that I hope will give us some sense of normalcy throughout it all. At no point will this church close. God's good news matters too much. Our community matters too much. We will continue to employ best practices, offer online options, and go to whatever lengths needed. This is not the news any of us wanted to hear, but I am encouraged that we are able to walk through it together as God's people.

Newcomer's Coffee with the Pastor

We are starting a new tradition this Sunday, Newcomer's Coffee with the Pastor. Every first Sunday of the month, all are welcome (but especially newcomers) to join me in Disciples Hall for coffee. Bring your questions, bring hopes to get plugged in, and expect for good conversation.

[Nick](#)

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.

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, August 1, 9:00 am:** Newcomer’s Coffee with the Pastor
- **Tuesday, August 3, 10:00 am:** DWF Board Meeting
- **Tuesday, August 3, 11:30 am:** Lunch Bunch at Si Senor (formerly Juan’s) 3121 Towson Ave. Call or text Dave Pulliam, 479.650.4101.

Dianna’s Notes

- 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.
- ◆ **Tije Mussett**

<p>For the Record July 25, 2021</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">Operating Receipts</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 2,016.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>To Date</td> <td style="text-align: right;">19,443.45</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Endowment</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>To Date</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Monthly Budgeted Needs</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$25,487.98</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">Greeters for August: Terry Hales and Julie Jay</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mission Statement</p> <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. 	Operating Receipts	\$ 2,016.00	To Date	19,443.45	Endowment		To Date		Monthly Budgeted Needs	\$25,487.98	<p>Elder for July Ruth Carson—479-629-3029</p> <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 style="text-align: center;">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>
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