



Reflections from the General Assembly

The General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Des Moines, Iowa, has been a wonderful time of renewal, education, and worship. This is my third General Assembly as a Disciples minister, and each experience has given me a renewed sense of hope during these difficult days of the church.

I use the word “difficult,” because the reality is many churches in our denomination are closing their doors for good, while many more are in a state of decline. The hopeful good news is that many churches are not only doing well, but they are thriving! Furthermore, the Disciples of Christ have started over 1,000 new churches in the last decade or so that are reaching more people with the gospel than all of our established churches combined.

So, what are churches doing these days that are thriving? They do things that stem from their core beliefs.

- **Focus outwardly.** Discipleship is not about getting people to come to our buildings, participate in our programs, believe our creeds or support our institutions. It is about making other disciples by going out and loving others where they are.
- **Follow Jesus.** We are disciples of Christ. And everyone will know this by our love because we are going to live, love and serve like Jesus. If we make it about anything else, we are not a church.
- **Welcome all.** Jesus never discriminated against anyone, nor should we. We must be Open and Affirming, because followers of Jesus have no business being closed and condemning.
- **Do Justice.** We must be pro-reconciling, anti-racism and anti-every-other-horrible-ism and phobia. As followers of Jesus, we must have a heart for people who are poor, marginalized and the oppressed and do all we can to bring them wholeness, restoration and peace.
- **Be ministers.** We don't pay clergy to be ministers for us. We all have been given gifts to be caregivers, grace-givers and hope-givers to one another. Clergy with training and experience can lead us to be ministers, but all are called and gifted to serve as ministers.
- **Live authentically.** God created human beings. Thus, we should not be afraid to act like one. We must openly confess our shortcomings, and never act like we are better than anyone else.
- **Embrace mystery.** No human being can grasp the full meaning of God. If we think we can, then our concept of God is too small. A safe environment should be created for questions to be freely asked, and doubt freely expressed.
- **Serve Ecumenically.** Partner with all who believe in the Golden Rule and in the greatest commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves. Interfaith relationships and partnerships are also to be fostered.
- **Communicate Transparently.** Fully disclose where every dollar goes and how every decision is made.
- **Go Green.** Avoid plastics and Styrofoam by using washable or biodegradable dinnerware. Plant a community garden. Serve fair-trade coffee (Disciples Exchange). Limit and recycle paper. Share documents via Google Drive and email.
- **Take risks.** Jesus' love for others got him killed. If we make this new venture about sanctuary, comfort, safety and security then we have missed the whole point of who Jesus calls us to be, where Jesus calls us to go, and who Jesus calls us to love.
- **Stay flexible.** The ministry plan is always subject to change. When we fall or falter, we must be ready to bounce back up to keep patiently moving forward.

Jarrett

First Christian Church
3501 Rogers Avenue
Fort Smith, Arkansas 72903

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Office Hours:
8:30am-4:30pm
Monday-Thursday

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Secretary

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Randy Alexander

Custodian

Patience Hudlow

Nursery Coordinator

Lesley Fleming

Nursery Attendant

Rev. Howard Marshall

Pastor Emeritus

Rev. Randy Jay

Pastor Emeritus

Mission Statement

The mission of First Christian Church, Fort Smith, Arkansas is to lift up Jesus the Christ by:

- 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.

Lectionary Readings

For the week of July 28

Hosea 1:2-10

Psalm 85

Colossians 2:6-15 (16-19)

Luke 11:1-13

Worship and Education Opportunities

July 28

**“Keep at It”
Rev. Dr. Banks
Luke 11:1-13**

Elders

Danny Lynch and Steve Parke

Deacons

John Warren (foreman), Jesse Bailey, Barbara Lynch, Nick Oliver, Dewayne Pryor, Tim Randolph, Vicki Warren, David Williamson

Prepare Communion

Jesse Bailey

Greeters

Nick Oliver and Rebecca Parke

Worship Leader

Danny Lynch

***Elder of the Month
Danny Lynch—719-8759***

Dianna’s Notes

Music Schedule

July 28	Mickie Matthews and Tim Fleming Bell Duet
	Robbie Wilson, Vocal Solo
August 4	Bruce Birkhead, Vocal Solo
	Becki Struble and Charlotte Scott Bell Tree Duet
August 11	Tim Fleming, Bell Solo

Bill & Jette Lindsay Scholarship

The trustees will offer scholarship money to any student that will be enrolled in college this coming fall 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, July 28.**

Church Calendar

Sunday, July 28

7:30 am Elders’ Meeting
8:30 am Worship (Chapel)
9:00 am Mission Café
9:30 am Sunday School
10:45 am Worship (Sanctuary)
6:00 pm Gather for Beer & Hymns
7:00 pm Sing

Tuesday, July 30

9:00 am Staff Meeting
11:30 am Lunch Bunch
(Chinese Kitchen, 1830 South C)

Fellowship and Service Opportunity

Youth Fellowship Lock in

Youth fellowship will meet at FCC Disciples Hall for a swim party and lock-in on **August 2** at 4:30 pm. We will travel to Bruce Birkhead’s for a few hours of swimming and a small meal provided by Dan and Zena Marshall.

After Bruce throws us out, we will return to the church for a night of service projects, games, and fun. We are asking if any would wish to provide snacks for the lock-in, please inform John Mundy or drop off snacks at Disciples Hall.

For the Record – July 21

Operating Receipts.....	\$ 4,383.75
To Date	14,742.20
Endowment to Date	104.00
Monthly Budgeted Needs.....	29,118.21

Mission Express O Café

The café opens at **9am each Sunday** morning. All the proceeds support the Mission trips. Setup **begins at 8:30am Sunday.** Come join us for fellowship, a cup of coffee and doughnuts.

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