

The Alert First Central Presbyterian Church Abilene, Texas

August, 2019

Cliff's Notes



It was in Antioch that the disciples were first called "Christians." Acts 11:26

I bet that you like me have words you use to describe yourself.

We identify ourselves with pride:

"I am a Texan." (actually I was born in Pennsylvania, but I got down here to West Texas as soon as I could!)

"I am a Republican or a Democrat or an Independent."

We identify ourselves with embarrassment:

"I am a failure."

"I am a loser."

It is a fact that we often describe ourselves as others see us. We take their descriptions of us and make them self-descriptions. A youngster never thought of himself as a "nerd" until somebody else describes him that way. An athlete may never think of herself as a tireless runner until a coach names her that. As a teenager she never thought of herself as attractive until some wonderful schoolmate told her that.

So in Antioch the disciples were for the first time called "Christians." I wonder if they took that as a compliment? Maybe they preferred thinking of themselves as disciples, brothers/sisters, followers of Jesus? "Christian" probably was said as an insult – a nickname chosen by outsiders.

Yet, the name stuck. We now see ourselves as Christians. We are not *first* Texans or Americans or what have you. Those are all secondary distinctions. We are *first* Christians.

What does it mean to be a Christian. If you check out the word in the dictionary you get down to about the third definition of the word "Christian" and you read something like this: "*Christian: a decent human being.*" But – being decent is not enough. To be full-blooded Christians, we have to be baptized into Christ death and resurrection and then spend a lifetime "following Jesus wherever he goes". To be a Christian is a follower of Christ – one who follows Christ down into death and back into life.

In Antioch or anywhere else, only disciples deserved to be called Christians.

Dear Jesus, as Christians we want to live up to our name as one of your followers. Only by your grace can we do it. Change us in to your likeness. Amen.



Around First Central

Festival of Faith 2019



First Central Presbyterian presents noted scholar, author, speaker Jason Byassee for its annual Festival of Faith, September 15-16. Described as erudite, lucid, and in surprising ways lighthearted, Jason Byassee's theme will be the title of his most recent book: **"Surprised by Jesus Again."**

The Festival of Faith will begin on Sunday, September 15 at both the 8:30 and 11 am worship services. The title of Jason's Sunday morning message will be: **"God is Back."**

And then again at 7 pm both Sunday and Monday nights with the title: **"God in Particular."**

A popular tradition for the Festival of Faith is the Monday Noon luncheon featuring Dr. Byassee "unplugged!" A box lunch is offered for \$6. Reservations are helpful (325-677-3501 or signup@fcpc.net).

A session for clergy will follow the noon luncheon. Byassee holds the Butler Chair in Homiletics and Hermeneutics at Vancouver School of Theology. He has authored thirteen books. Author Nadia Bolz-Weber describes Jason Byassee as "a genius." Well deserved accolades emanate from Fleming Rutledge, Will Willimon, Eugene Peterson. He regularly speaks and writes on such diverse topics as theology, church history, politics, liturgy, popular culture, and spiritual practices.

The entire event is open to the community. Cliff comments "We consider this an event meant to enrich the faith community of Abilene and surrounding communities. This year's speaker is particularly adept at encouraging the faith expression of a wide range of Christian traditions. His scholarship is solid and persuasive, and his arguments surprise and impress."

There will be childcare during all events.

Join Us for Jacob Snowden's Ordination!



We welcome the entire congregation to join us on Sunday, September 8 at 4 p.m. for Jacob Snowden's ordination service.

The Big Splash at FCPC!

Make a Big Splash to start the Church School Year. August 18, from 5:30-7:30 pm, everyone is invited to an all-church picnic at Buffalo Gap Camp. Stay cool in the pool or play in the pavilion. Deacons



will be preparing Hot Dogs, Christian Education will have desserts, but you are encouraged to bring drinks, chips or other sides, and anything else to celebrate a new school year. All people are welcome, and those with students are especially encouraged to enjoy an evening that caps off both the end of summer and the beginning of all things new. You never know what surprises and hijinks might be in store. Find your flip flops; take a towel; enjoy the fellowship.

Returned from Romania



The group from Palo Duro Presbytery (PDP) of 16 people, 11 of whom were from FCPC, returned from Tulcea, Romania on August 6. While I'm Romania

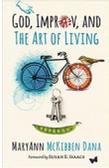
this group from the PDP facilitated day-camps for Romanian children that live in government-run group homes. This work was done in partnership with NOROC (New Opportunities for Romanian Orphaned Children), a non-profit organization that serves these children 365 days a year and is a ministry born out of FCPC and PDP. Thankful does not begin to describe my feelings as I reflect upon our time in Tulcea. On the American side, we were supported in prayer by our church families. We were also able to afford to do this work due to the generosity of FCPC, the Palo Duro Presbytery, the Synod of the Son, and individual donors. On the Romanian side, we were lavished with hospitality and friendship! We were fed, guided, protected, reassured, and supported every moment of this experience. I have no doubt God's love was made known due to our work supported by the prayers of the church.

Under Construction!

Godly Play is getting an update! We are moving the Godly Play room from the 3rd floor to the 1st floor across from the nursery. We are also training new teachers and updating our equipment. This project will take some time. If you have a child in K or 1st grade and you are not sure they are ready to worship in the sanctuary, they are invited to go to the nursery after the children's sermon. There will be a play room reserved for older children to enjoy until Godly Play is ready to relaunch. Make sure to read your pew sheet each week to see when Godly Play is back up and running!



Phoebe's Friends



Phoebe's Friends annual fall coffee will be Monday, August 26, 10 a.m. at Janice's house, 65 Glen Abbey St. Plan to attend and hear an overview of the study book, God, Improv, and the Art of Living by Mary Ann McKibben Dana. Copies of the book are available in the church office for \$17. Friends are welcome to attend the coffee and childcare will be available at the church upon request.

Garden News

Commemorative brick order forms are available in the foyer. What a lasting way to honor a loved one or mark a milestone event in someone's life! Each brick can accommodate 3 lines of print and up to 27 characters per line. The bricks will become part of a brick lane leading to a gazebo in the Meditation Garden, a ministry of Presbyterian Women. Order your bricks today or take an order form home with you and once completed, return to the church office, along with payment of \$50 per brick.



Library Update



The FCPC library is undergoing changes that will make using the library more enjoyable and convenient for the entire family! Thanks to a generous gift from the late Fred Oakes, new books for all ages and interests are being purchased, and we are working on upgrading to an online catalog and check out system to make the library easier to use. While this transformation is underway, you're still invited to visit the library and check out books on Sunday mornings. Thank you, Janis Test and Chris Faehnle, for taking on this big project. We'll keep you posted on its progress!

Wednesday Nights

Wednesday Night Programs are soon to be determined. If you have an idea for a topic or speaker, send Cliff an email and let him know! We're always looking for informative, entertaining, inspiring, thought-provoking programs. Wednesday nights resume in September. Watch for details in the coming weeks. Go ahead now and reserve Wednesday evenings and plan to join us each week for a meal, 5:45 p.m. - 6:15 p.m., followed by mid-week prayer and programs, 6:30-7:30 p.m. this Fall!



Flower Ministry – Help Needed!



The FCPC Flower Ministry delivers vases of flowers created from our Sunday arrangements to our homebound and hospitalized members to brighten their day. We are seeking a volunteer to help deliver flowers after the second Sunday of each month. If you are interested, please contact the church office or Garrett Briggs at 325-701-4709.

Sanctuary and Foyer Flowers

Sanctuary and foyer flowers are a lovely way to provide a memorial or honorarium for someone special. The cost is \$80 and the flowers may be taken home after the Sunday services or you may choose to donate them to homebound members. If you are interested in purchasing flowers, please check the form at the Information Desk or contact Doreta in the church office for specific dates.



Change of Address? New Phone Number?



We greatly appreciate information updates at any time. Please contact the church office with any new or updated information so that we can let you know about everything going on at FCPC! Please note if a phone number is a cell number or land line—it's very helpful to have your cell number if you have one. Email addresses are also needed!

Food Pantry News

Dear Friends of the Frances Buzard Presbyterian Food Pantry, We are very busy at the pantry this summer. We served around 40 families just this week. We distribute lots of food and provide a much needed service for our community.



We could really use canned vegetables, especially corn and green beans. Some grocery stores sell these at reduced prices if you buy a case of 12. We also need canned fruit, granola bars, juice boxes, and bags with handles for our clients who walk.

If you have enough food for yourself and your family, be thankful. Then consider donating items we have suggested or make a donation to the Food Pantry. As always we appreciate your prayers for this ministry.

In July, the Food Pantry served 127 families, for a total of 436 people—257 adults, 63 senior citizens, and 116 children ages 1-18.

Breakfast on Beech Street



Breakfast on Beech Street is a daily ministry carried out by volunteers from 4 or 5 congregations, each responsible for one day per week. FCPC volunteers serve each Thursday morning, arriving at 5 a.m. in order to prepare biscuits and gravy and be ready to serve guests by 6:30 a.m. to 7:15 a.m. Volunteers are usually finished by 7:30 a.m. It's a rewarding way to get your Thursdays off to a great start! All meals are served from the First Christian Church kitchen, on the corner of N. 3rd and Beech Street. If you are interested in serving one Thursday morning per month, call the church office at 677-3501 and ask for more information and how to get started!

We had a busy July with 1865 guests (43 were between 1-18 yrs. old) received breakfasts and lunches which included 2914 sandwiches plus cookies, fruit and a scripture.

Gratitude

Dear Friends,
Thank you so very much for your donation to IWMF in memory of Carl. I really appreciated your thoughtfulness during this difficult time.

Blessings, Lynn Roeder and Family

To the Saints at First Central,
We thank God today that we are joined in Palo Duro Presbytery. We ask God's continued blessing on your ministry in Abilene. You are our sisters and brothers in Him and you are beloved!

Love, FPC Lamesa

Dear Bequests and Planned Giving Committee,
Thank you so much for your extremely generous donation to my Eagle Scout project! Your contribution to my project helped provide covers on the walls of my pit which helps protect campers and the pit itself. Thank you again!

Blessings, Jacob Pate

Dear FCPC Friends,
Your generous gift for our preservation project is so very much appreciated. The project began the first week of July and is anticipated to be complete in 4 to 5 months. We invite you to visit after our historic church is restored.

Blessings, Members of FPC Baird

Dear Friends,
Noah Project couldn't operate without the selfless giving of so many in the Big Country. Your gift brought smiles to our faces and warmth to our hearts. Thank you for your generous gift.

With Gratitude,

Melissa Dick, Donor Relations Specialist
Noah Project

Dear FCPC,
Thank you for your continued support of our Buddy Walk. Each year our event grows enabling us to reach more families and promoted awareness for the Down syndrome community. We sincerely appreciate you!

Blessings, Jon & Susan Pate and
The Upside Down Club of Abilene

Dear FCPC Family,
Our family gives many thanks for the love, thoughts, and prayers during the illness and passing of our mother, wife, and grandmother, Joan Eyssen. Thank you for providing food for our family as well. FCPC is and continues to be a blessing in our lives. Thank you for walking beside us during these difficult days.

Much Love,

Laura King, Tim Eyssen, and family of Joan
Eyssen

Sympathy

We extend our sympathies to Jayne Middleton and family on the death of Carl Trusler, to the family of Cathy Robinson on her death, to the family of Viola Shields on her death, to Bill Carroll and family on the death of Bill's mother, and to Carol Dromgoole and family on the death of her mother, Ellen Webb.

Celebrations

We would like to celebrate the birth of Kennedy Reign Alvis, born July 1 in Fort Worth, Texas. Parents are Aleix & John Alvis and proud grandparents at FCPC are Mark & Margaret Beasley.

New Members

We warmly welcome Kali Gentry, T.R. Singh, and Courtney Bevill to the FCPC family!