



Dear FCC Family and Friends,



This coming Saturday morning I will have the privilege of doing something that I thoroughly enjoy. I will be judging the Statewide Student Ethics Challenge for the sixth time in seven years. I missed the opportunity two years ago due to my hip surgery.

The ethics challenge is sponsored by the Oklahoma Business Ethics Consortium and presents college students with some real-world situations where ethical choices have to be made. It pits two college teams of usually four to six students on each team. It is a modified debate-style format that includes questions from the judges at the close.

Over the years, I have had my eyes opened on many occasions by these college students who seem to have a very good understanding of ethics. I will never forget that a few years ago, the first case up was on “gay conversion therapy.” Students from OBU got the case, and what I was expecting from them was about 180 degrees from the position they took. I will always remember the student who introduced the case saying, “The first and foremost important ethical question is: ‘why should someone who is gay be made to believe there is something wrong with the way God made them?’” I was amazed. The group went ahead and presented their research based on the individual who first came up with “gay conversion therapy” and how **he had discredited his work** in this area; and before he died, he had written that the therapy does not work and is harmful, based on the fact that an overwhelming majority of those who went through the therapy reverted back or committed suicide.

The team that was opposed to the OBU team was from Oklahoma Christian University, a Church of Christ school. I was again shocked by their response. The only thing they thought should have been added to the OBU team’s presentation was that if a gay person volunteered to try it, they should be allowed to do so.

As I said, I had my eyes opened.

Our text for Sunday is about Jesus opening the eyes of Bartimaeus. What we discover is that Bartimaeus in his blindness saw who Jesus was when His own disciples were still struggling to truly see Him for who he was.

Too many times in our lives we see without truly seeing. Sometimes we have some images etched in our minds that are wrong. This is the basis of racism, bigotry, and judgment. For example, we tend to put a high value on beauty. Yet, in Isaiah 53, in the prophecy about the coming Messiah we read, **“He had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces...”** Isaiah 53:2b-3a. (NRSV) I recall Fred Craddock telling about a visit to an artist to see a portrait of Jesus. The face was described as ugly and misshapen. The artist based her portrait of Jesus on this scripture.

In so many ways, we can’t trust our eyes. We may not be blind, but too many times we do not see people as Jesus sees people.

Those two groups of college students from two rather religiously conservative institutions opened my eyes that day. Their presentation is something that I will never forget, and their question is one we should all be asking. Why should we be judging people because of the way God made them?

I will probably have my eyes opened again this Saturday. Some of the cases include the current issue about vaccinations posing the question “Should there be a tax placed on people who refuse vaccinations?” Another case is about forced chemotherapy for minors who do not want it. Another is on the Indian Child Welfare Act. Another could be right out of *The Oklahoman* this week about doctors and people’s addiction to pain pills. Another is about body-types—particularly related to women’s beauty. Another is about a bakery that was fined for refusing to bake a wedding cake for a gay couple.

I think my favorite is about composting corpses. This one is about a system where bodies are composted into usable soil. One of the arguments for composting is that currently 90,000 tons of steel (for caskets), 9 million meters of wood, and 1.6 million tons of concrete are used to bury the dead each year. Those arguing for composting also says that a single cremation uses enough energy to meet the energy needs of one person for a whole month. I’m thinking about being composted.

The sermon title for Sunday is “No Holding Back” and is based on Mark 10:46-52.

If you are able, plan to be in worship this Sunday. Come asking Jesus for the ability to see as He sees.

Pastor Ray

Central Area Churches Praying for Churches Week of Oct. 25—Midwest Blvd. Christian Church, Midwest City

| Attendance | | Giving | |
|------------------|----|--------------------------|------------|
| Sunday Worship | 48 | Giving for operations | \$3,313.83 |
| Emerging Worship | 9 | Giving for Capital | .00 |
| Total | 57 | Giving for Outreach | .00 |
| Sunday School | 21 | Giving total | \$3,313.83 |
| | | Pumpkin Sales thru 10/18 | \$7,351.00 |
| | | Other Sales thru 10/18 | \$1,220.47 |

Keep Us Informed

Please contact your church if you or a loved one is ill, injured, in the hospital, needs special prayer, wants a visit, or has other needs.

Pastor Ray’s: Cell Phone-**405-833-2272**
Email-**raybelford@hotmail.com**
Office: (405) **275-1525**

*I will bless the Lord at all times; his
praise shall continually be in my mouth.
My soul makes its boast in the Lord, let
the humble hear and be glad.
O magnify the Lord with me, and let us
exalt his name together.
Psalm 34:1-3 NRSV*

Office Hours

Monday-Thursday 8:30 am - 4:30 pm
Lunch times vary

Email: **office@fccshawnee.com**

Church Website: **www.fccshawnee.com**

We are collecting
EXTRA—HEAVY sacks
for the
take-out service
of our February
Ground Hog Dinner.
THANKS!



Dinner containers
will also sit flat in
CHICK-FIL-A sacks.
Save ‘em up
and send ‘em in!

Reception
HONORING
former

Music Director
Marcia Scott

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2015
9:00-9:50 A.M.

Given with love by
First Christian Church

*A Basket Will Be Available for
Cards & Gifts*



Special Called Board Meeting

There will be a special called board meeting Sunday, October 25, following worship. There will be two main items on the agenda. First, the board will be asked to approve an agreement to provide space for the Family Justice Center. Second, the board will be provided draft copies of proposed changes in the church's Constitution and By-Laws.

The board previously approved the senior pastor and board chair to negotiate with District Attorney Richard Smothermon and his staff regarding utilizing a portion of our education wing for offices for the Family Justice Center during its formative period. An oral agreement was reached last week with Board Chair Robin Talley drafting a written agreement to be signed by both parties to move forward with this project.

The Family Justice Center (FJC) will be providing a much needed service in our community which will provide centralized services for children who have been abused. This project should be viewed by our church as an opportunity for ministry. Initially, we will be housing FJC staff, local law enforcement officers who work these cases, and district attorney staff personnel who prosecute the cases. They will also be providing some training for local nurses in collecting and proper handling of evidence.

It is possible, that the child welfare division of our local Department of Human Services might locate in space on the first floor of our education wing in the future. If that does occur, all of the elements for centralized handling of child abuse, except for shelter, will be in place prior to the construction of their new facility. The FJC is currently working to raise \$7.5 million for the facility.

Following our strategic planning session last year it was recommended that our church Constitution and By-Laws be changed through amendments to reduce the number of standing committees; define membership in a way which reflects more clearly who we are; and provide more flexibility regarding called meetings, etc. The drafts are for information purposes, and no action will be taken at the special board meeting. Action on the proposed changes will be taken at the regularly scheduled November board meeting, and if approved they will be placed on the agenda for the Annual Congregational Meeting in November.

There will also be an update on the current financial situation of the church which has been showing some improvement.

Fruitful Fall Fellowship



Thank You to all the Oklahoma Bluegrass groups who entertained at the Pumpkin Patch last Saturday, to Wilda Thomas who organized it, and to Nelda Ward for the photos.

Mustang Ramblers (Tuttle, OK)
Les & Audrey Calgar and Mara & Jim Sides

Sweet Country Grass
(McCloud, OK)
Ron & Betty Reser and
LaVonja Tracy

Highway 51 Bluegrass (Stillwater, OK)
Garland Blocker, Carla Hooper, Russell Thomas (Don & Wilda's son,) and Jimmy Bryson.



Photos by Nelda Ward



JOIN IN THE FUN

OF
SERVICE

- Donate money for bridge refurbishing.
- Be a sitter or keep a worker company.
- Visit and talk to the customers.
- Be our face to potential congregants.
- Drop by and turn pumpkins.
- Bake pumpkin seeds.
- Read a story to school children.
- Serve snacks to school children.
- Paint pumpkins to sell.
- Help unload, next time: **Oct. 20, ETA 4:00**
- Provide water to those who unload.
- Haul-off bad pumpkins.

ASSOCIATE MINISTRY MATTERS

Millennial Minute

The Youth are continuing to serve at the Pumpkin Patch on Wednesday evenings from 4:00-7:00. They provide some much needed pumpkin turning, and we provided dinner! This is a wonderful opportunity for our youth to serve our congregation while getting to know some of our "wiser" members. Let's continue to make this a positive experience for them! Also, the Youth and their parents are encouraged to come to the Church on Tuesday after school to help unload more pumpkins! The patch is beginning to look a little scant. Thank you, in advance, for your hard work!

October also marks the beginning of our Fall Food Drive. Collection baskets are placed at the entrances to the Sanctuary. Food collected during the months of October and November is used to create Thanksgiving Baskets for needy families in our community. A list of needed foods has been listed in previous newsletters and is available at the Church. Please let us know if you know of a family that would be blessed to receive one of these baskets. We hope to collect enough food for a dozen baskets this year!

Music Notes

Choir rehearsals are off and running! We hope you've been blessed with the beautiful music that the Chancel Choir has offered during worship. It's been a lot of fun and a meaningful experience. Let us know if you'd like to join us! We are a small choir, so there is plenty of room for you! There is no audition, and rehearsals are after worship from 11:15 to 12:00. We will begin music for the Christmas season this Sunday! Thank you, in advance, for sharing your time and talents with our Community of Faith!

Something from the Seminary

Phillips Seminary's InterReligious Understanding program is underway! This program, open to any interested person, is held at Phillips Seminary on Thursday evenings from 6:00-9:00 and will introduce the participant to a different religious tradition each week! This is a wonderful way for Disciples to learn about the world's great faith traditions in a welcoming, scholarly environment. Registration is now open and the registration fee is \$20 per course. This week the focus is on Buddhism. Let me know if you would like to register! Scholarships are available. To learn more visit pstulsa.edu/InterReligiousUnderstanding.

Autumn Blessings!

josh



EXTRA HELP NEEDED
SATURDAYS

GIVE ANY TIME YOU HAVE
30 MINUTES OR MORE
WOULD BE GREAT!

Saturday, October 24: KID'S DAY!
Costume Contest 1:00

Help unload, only 1/3 of the next load is ours.
Tuesday, October 20—maybe at 4:00. Check email & fb.

- Tues., Oct. 20—PARTIAL LOAD OF PUMPKINS, ETA 4:00. Join in the fellowship unloading.
- Wed., Oct. 21—Boomer Bridge noon-5:00 p.m.
Youth work the Pumpkin Patch 4-7:00 p.m.
- Sat., Oct. 24—Kids' Fun Day at the Pumpkin Patch. Costume contest at 1:00.
- Sun., Oct. 25—Sunday school 9:00-9:30 a.m. Reception for Marcia Scott 9:00-9:50 a.m.
- UNITED SERVICE 10 a.m. Chancel Choir rehearsal 11:15-12:00.
- Wed., Oct. 28—Boomer Bridge noon-5:00 p.m.
Youth work the Pumpkin Patch 4-7:00 p.m.
- Sat., Oct. 31—Halloween. Kids get treats at the Pumpkin Patch.
- Sun., Nov. 1—Sunday school 9:00-9:30 a.m. Fellowship 9:30-9:50 a.m.
- UNITED SERVICE 10 a.m. Chancel Choir rehearsal 11:15-12:00