



## THE SEBRING CHRISTIAN

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### FROM THE PASTOR

Last month I shared three reasons out of nine why small churches thrive. Those three reasons are 1. Small churches are particularly authentic. 2. Small churches stay connected. 3. There is always time for prayers of the people. In our congregation, we see those three as central to who we are. The next three is where our congregation excels.

Reason four why small churches thrive is that people can build genuine loving relationships. I have been in very few congregations that can do that effectively but it seems to come very naturally for the First Christian Church Congregation of Sebring. We build relationships that last for years and even though we sometimes disagree with one another, it does not stop us from loving one another. We have a history with one another, yet we come together in worship and it is authentic and true worship. Even though at times our relationship may be strange and strained, it is still a genuine love and loving relationship.

Number five is one of the strongest points of our congregation. It is that the lay leaders are active and ready to help out. When I suggest sometimes it is often seemingly done before I ask it. We have the office Angels, some are paid but still do much volunteer work, as well as other volunteers.

ALL are very talented. As a matter of fact, the Clift's, who are relatively new, made the statement at lunch saying, "this congregation has a lot of talent". That talent is evident in the fellowships, outreach, worship, missions and property upkeep. We have strong leadership in so many areas of the church including group meetings, lunches, suppers, dinner, and movies. Lay leaders are active and ready to minister and is the primary key why we, as a small church, continue to thrive.

Number six is small churches wholeheartedly welcome visitors and guests, introducing themselves and saying hello at the beginning of the service. Large churches cannot do that. They simply can't because they are too big to be individualized. Small churches can be individualized with a simple "hello". People want to be loved. In our country where individualism is most valued, people want to belong to a group that is accepting of them and their gifts. Those gifts can make a bigger impact in a small church.

Let us continue in fostering loving and caring relationships, being and building active and ready lay leaders, and giving an open and warm welcome to those that come.

Pastor Alan's September Projected Office Days: 3, 4, 10, 11, 17, 18, 24, 25.

## D.O.C. Women

The ladies of the church will meet on Friday, Sept. 6th at 10:00 in the library. We are a group working to serve the Lord by serving the church. We have many organizations we support as well as being in charge of funeral dinners. This fall we are going to be studying some of the parables of Christ. Please join us for 1 to 1 ½ hours of fellowship and prayer with study. All attendees of the church are invited to join us.



## D.O.C. Men

It's hard to believe that the summer has whizzed by and it is time to start thinking about getting revved up for fall activities already. In just a few weeks we will be getting ready for our first men's breakfast on September 14th. DOC Men is not an exclusive club here at First Christian. It is open to all men of the church, members and non-members. It provides us the opportunity to fellowship together, support each other and our church in prayer, and be involved in various projects benefiting the church at large.

Hopefully you have stayed in touch with your prayer partners during the summer, reminding them that you are lifting them up and praying for them. We will have a revealing of our secret prayer partners in October when, hopefully, all of our snowbirds will be back and we will draw names for new partners for the 2019-2020 year.

Hope to see you, Saturday, Sept 14th, 8:00 am

Rich Campton

BTW (By the way) not related to DOC men:

Some of you may have noticed the statue in the office patio of the young boy riding a fish. The statue appeared suddenly, donated anonymously. At first it seemed like an odd thing to put on display in our church garden, but actually there is a great deal of theological significance in it. To begin with, the ancient symbol of Christianity was the fish. ICTHUS. During the early days of persecution the sign of the fish was a secret message by which the followers of Jesus identified themselves to each other.

You will notice that the fish has a gold coin in its mouth. In Matthew 17:27 Tax collectors put Peter on the spot and asked if Jesus paid taxes. Peter responded, "Of course he does"....Later when the subject came up, Jesus asked Peter, "When it comes time to pay taxes to the king, who pays...the children or the subjects? Of course the answer was that the children of the King were free, they didn't have to pay taxes, but subjects were required to pay. In keeping with his teachings about not being concerned about what to eat and what to wear, believing that God would provide, Jesus tells Peter to go fishing, "pull in the first fish that bites. Open its mouth and you will find a coin. Take it and give it to the tax men. It will be enough for both of us"

On another occasion when the question of paying taxes came up Jesus asked to see a coin..."Who's image is on the coin?" "Cesar" they replied, "Then give to Cesar what belongs to Cesar and give to God what belongs to God"

And what of the cherub sitting astride the fish? Could this perhaps be a symbol of Christ himself, in charge of the church?



## OUTREACH

Recently Wanda Gordon, C.J. Wiggin, and Mark Wilson attended a workshop on Operation Christmas Child Shoebox. They reaped a lot of good ideas of things to make and things that can be included for children to make themselves.

We picked up more leaflets giving suggestions of things to put in a box and what NOT to put in a box. Please pick one up. Harbor Freight has coupons for a free flashlight with other purchase that are a very nice size to include in a box.

Check out the 1<sup>st</sup> room on the left as you enter from the parking lot for our display of items that have been purchased for the boxes. There are a number of shoeboxes available if you'd like to take one or more and fill. Remember the boxes are categorized by age 2-4, 5-9, and 10-14.

### SERVING OTHERS

**Sept. 1** Elder – Rich Campton & Ron Colwell  
Servers – Todd & Robin Martin  
Acolyte – Todd Martin  
Greeter – Robin & Todd Martin

**Sept. 22** Elder – Marla Null  
Servers – Helen & Johnny Kelly  
Acolyte – Johnny Kelly  
Greeter – Larry Andrews

**Sept. 8** Elder – Sandra Laufer  
Servers – Roger Sands & Sue Colwell  
Acolyte – Roger Sands  
Greeter – Sue Colwell

**Sept. 29** Elder – Linda Ellis  
Servers – R. Sands & Kathy W.  
Acolyte – Kathy Whitlock  
Greeter – Mary Ann Thomas

**Sept. 15** Elder – Teresa Williams  
Servers – Helen Kelly & Rich Neff  
Acolyte – Helen Kelly  
Greeter – Rich & Rita Neff

### BIRTHDAYS

**Sept. 7** Joan McWilliams  
**8** Rachel Wright  
**10** Linda Johnson  
**12** Desmond Walker  
**17** Frances Goff  
**20** Johnny Kelly  
**30** Trevor Warman

### ANNIVERSARIES

**Sept. 4** Howard & Shirley Lewis  
**4** Jerry & Kay Duball  
**16** Fred & Liz Collins





HP

## CHOIR NEWS (September 2019)

We have new music and will be singing a lot from a Bill and Gloria Gaither book. I know you'll love the songs as they will all be familiar to you. Also we'd like to welcome Sam Clift to our choir in the bass section. Glad to have you Sam!!! Come join us everyone!!!!  
Keep in Tune,

### A JOYFUL NOISE

The chime choir is still in business and working hard. We will be playing "Be Thou My Vision" for you on Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup>. Come and bring a friend to church!!! Most music is written

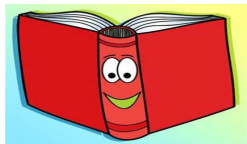
for many more members than we have so we'd love to have you join. Give it try to see if you would enjoy it.

We practice Mondays 6:30 – 7:30.

For Whom the Bell Tolls,

Jaquae

## BOOK CLUB



We are now reading "Bees In The Butterfly Garden" by Maureen Lang. This is a novel of the Gilded Age as our story begins in 1879.

Meg Davenport, raised in an exclusive boarding school, has all she needs, but not what she wants most which is the love of a family. She doesn't want her future based on etiquette and marrying well. She has hardly ever seen her father and suddenly he dies giving

her the chance to break all the rules surrounding her life. She learns John Davenport, her father, wasn't the wealthy businessman she thought, but one of the Gilded Age's most talented thieves!

Now comes along Ian Mcguire, who's mentor was John Davenport. He knows John would never have wanted his daughter to carry on in his footsteps, yet she is determined to carry on his legacy. Her talent for garden design has earned her an invitation to stay with one of Fifth Avenue's wealthiest families. Meg could actually help Ian pull off his biggest heist yet. But Meg learns living in both worlds is dangerous, and Ian finds himself torn between greed and guilt as he discovers his love for Meg. Can they find the legacy they both long for? Or in trying to gain everything will they lose it all?

We are finishing the book on Sept. 5<sup>th</sup>, reading Chapter 27 through the Epilogue.

Our next book will be "In The Shadow Of Denali" by Tracie Peterson and we will begin that book on Sept. 19. It is set in Alaska and involves a mystery.

Please join us in the library at 5:30 pm.

### Membership Evangelism Events

#### Movie Matinee

On the third Saturday of the month. Our next Movie will be on September 21<sup>st</sup> at 4PM –The church will provide fresh popcorn and drinks. Featured movie – TBA

#### Disciples Diner

We just had another great lunch provided by the Disciples Diner as Rich Campton and Rich Neff hosted the Loaded Baked Potato Dinner.

If you would like to host a lunch or dinner using the Disciples Diner facility please contact Teresa Williams and we'll get you set up.

The objective of the Disciples Diner came to me when I realized so many folks dine out after church on Sunday's and this is just one way you or your committee or group, can "invite, host, prepare and enjoy" one of your favorite dishes. You charge enough to cover the expense of the meal, it is not intended to be a fund raising event. I hope you all enjoy this opportunity.

#### Committee Members Needed

This committee has been a long time running with very little changes in its members. I would like to encourage you to join us. So many of our responsibilities are done behind the scenes and we would appreciate the help as well as fresh ideas for how we can improve what we do and become more creative. I look forward to hearing from you.

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