

The Visitor

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), 900 S. Ennis, Bryan, TX

January 15, 2018



Words on Habitat from Michael

Habitat for Humanity builds 10 homes a year in Bryan and College Station. Since 1990, 285 homes have been built here. If that doesn't impress you, they have built whole subdivisions! Shanon's Court has 45 Habitat homes. Another has 105.

Are the homes free? No, the homeowner pays a mortgage, no interest, over 20 years. They also pay utilities and property taxes like everyone else. So, what's the big deal?

The selectees are from applicants who live in sub-standard or unlivable or overcrowded housing. A third of their income goes for rent. Forty (40%) of B/CS residents are below the poverty line. They will likely never get a bank home loan nor have the necessary down payment to purchase a home. They must have lived in B/CS for 5 years. So they have a need (home), have ability to pay (a job) plus must contribute 500 hours to building a Habitat home. 200 of these volunteer hours must be completed on someone else's home before their home is begun. As part of the process Habitat vets them carefully, even doing a credit score.

Volunteers build the homes, though where required, licensed contractors are hired. Many contractors donate either their time or materials or both or sell Habitat materials at cost. God is good!

Although the amount has increased over time, currently it takes \$55,000 to sponsor a Habitat home. The Faith in Action Committee, of which FCC is a member, works to raise the

remainder. The two largest fund raisers are the Pumpkin Patch at Halloween and the Run for the House event in March. Eight to twelve churches and other religious organizations make up the Faith in Action Committee and Habitat is working to include more groups and create new fund-raising events. Individuals and businesses also contribute to Habitat, including members of FCC. This is where you come in. You can ask your business friends and others to donate to Habitat. Any amount is appreciated and tax deductible.

There is a wall raising celebration on January 20th at 1126 E. 21st Street at 8 a.m. You are invited. By the end of the work day, all walls should be raised so that the prospective owner can see the layout.

All this work for someone who no one never heard of. Why? "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." Matthew 25:40.

Michael Bozardt
FCC Rep to FiAC

Last Sunday's Sermon

Title: "Coming to Faith"

Scriptures: 1 Samuel 3:1-10; John 1:40-51

[Click Here to Listen to the Sermon](#)

Coming to faith can be as simple and direct as hearing the word. But to hear God's Word someone must first offer it. And at the risk of complicating that simple and beautiful act of sharing God's word, coming to faith is also a creative and on-going process. It doesn't come to us fully formed in a blinding flash. When it comes to the first part of that two-fold proposition, the simple and direct sharing that leads people to Jesus, my favorite text is today's reading from John 1. The sequence that catches my eye, however, does not begin with Andrew in verse 40. The beginning of this story and the point of origin for all the Church's witness to Jesus Christ, begins with these words in verse 19: "*This is the testimony given by John...*" The long chain of witness that now stretches through two millennia and to the ends of the earth, began at the Jordan River with John the Baptist.

All four gospels place John the Baptist at what might be understood as the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, at the baptism of our Lord. In the synoptics, Mathew, Mark and Luke, Jesus' baptism and the signs of God's endorsement dominate accounts. The focus of John's gospel is different. After presenting the divine credentials of Christ in the gospel's prologue, John's narrative turns to a human voice rather than a divine one. Unlike the synoptics, the baptism itself is missing, and is only referred to as having happened. John the Baptist is the one who identifies Jesus as God's chosen One: "*Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!* Even before Jesus' ministry could offer its own testimony, John the Baptist stepped forward to become the point of origin for the Church's witness to Jesus Christ.

With this beginning, the Gospel of John effectively serves up a primer on witnessing. First, take note that the Baptist did not attempt to answer questions that were beyond his own experience or ability to answer. Instead, he made two direct and personal statements. First, he testified that the central purpose of his baptismal ministry was that the One sent by God might be revealed through it. Though John's gospel will eventually say that the Holy Spirit had not yet been given, John the Baptist appears to be an exception. For the Baptist tells us: "*the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain... is God's Chosen One.'*" (1:33-34) This much arises from John's faith.

The second point, represents eye-witness testimony. After baptizing Jesus, John the Baptist would later testify that "*I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him.*" (1:32) This much is certainly implied by the synoptics, but John's gospel presents it directly and for a purpose. Listeners evaluate testimony based on their perception of the

witness. Is that witness trustworthy. Is the testimony believable? The Gospel of John begins the Church's testimony with the words of an unimpeachable witness, John the Baptist. All this contains important lessons for all who would come after him. Don't talk about what you cannot or do not know. Instead, speak from the certainty of your faith and out of your personal experience of it. So before setting out offer testimony for Christ, first consider the nature of your personal witness. What is it that you are called to share?

By reading farther down the column, more of the lesson unfolds. Between verses 29 and 37, John offers testimony on two separate occasion. Both times we might presume that John was speaking openly to anyone who could hear. We learn nothing more about the first occasion, only that it happened, but on the second listeners included at least two people well known to him, two of the Baptist's own followers. These two, one of whom was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, were led to follow Jesus by the Baptist's witness that day. By spending time with Jesus, they had their own experiences on which draw. Lesson: John's witness seems to have been most effective among those who had a relationship with him, and by virtue of that had more reason to listen and trust. Today there is a name for this; we call it relational evangelism. Our testimony is more effective among those who have reason to trust us.

By the time we reach the portion of the story read today, we see Andrew applying these lessons in his own witness. Andrew engaged in relational evangelism by seeking out his brother and sharing his testimony: *"We have found the Messiah."* Though he clearly trusted the Baptist's witness, Andrew also shared out of his own personal experience too. From there we see the Church's chain of witness develop, as one by one people come to faith. The Gospel of John's account in chapter one must be kept in mind when we turn to the synoptics and read about the calling of Peter and Andrew and their fishing partners, James and John. Without any doubt, the ground had been prepared in advance. Before they became disciples of Jesus, they received testimony from those considered trustworthy.

After coming to Jesus, only then did the real training begin. As we share faith, it is important to remember that being lead to Jesus by someone's witness is only the first step in coming to faith. Faith only develops in so far as it is nurtured. Often that occurs in the context of mentoring relations, like that seen in 1 Samuel between Eli and young Samuel, or the one between Paul and young Timothy documented in Acts and the Epistles. But those are separate sermons. Amen!

Next Sunday's Message

Title: "Family Fishing Stories"
Scriptures: Jonah 3:1-10; Mark 1::14-20
Starting Point: Take this as a challenge (I certainly did.) Both scriptures are from the lectionary readings for this Sunday. Where do these very difference scriptures connect? As you reflect on them during the week where does the Spirit lead you? (My advice: God will provide the call, but you are the one who must answer it.)

Serving Sunday, January 21

Elders:

Ron Colbert
Ann Thompson

Deacons:

Mary Anne Culpepper
Betty Kostelka
Cheri Graalum
Hunter Graalum JD

Lay Leader:

Mary Richards

Communion:

Mary Richards

Choir Director:

Karl Aufderheide

Pianist

Karen Smith

Prayer Concerns

While we believe everyone needs prayer, those named on our list have specific and ongoing needs,

Evelyn Lively
Michael Maloney
Liz McGee
R. J. Bozeman
Christopher Cravey (Jeanette Phariss' nephew)
Vicki Couvillin
Kevin Rodgers
David Hahn
Diane Andrews (friend of Cheryl Aufderheide)
Jo Naumann (Jessica Meng's grandmother)
Buddy Wilson (friend of Larry & Vicki Green)

Ellie Erin Albrecht
Julie Atterbury
D'andre Fleeks
Brad Slocum (brother of Stacy Atterbury)
Roger & Emily Nichols
Mark Stadelman
Mary Anna Franke
Jim Conway (cousin of Bob Richards)
Pam Kopf (friend of Vicki Green)
Leatha Jeffrey (Calvin Jeffrey's mother)

Shut-Ins

Henry & Rosemary O'Neal
Nancy & Art Wright
Eleanor Kindt
Marge Shepperd
Gene Holt

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH B/CS

JANUARY 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<i>1</i> New Year's Day	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i> Choir 7:30 pm Elders Mtg 6:00	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i> OFFICE CLOSED	<i>6</i>
<i>7</i> Disciples Breakfast 8:30AM Moming Worship 10:45 AM Sunday School 9:30 AM Youth Group 3:00 PM	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i> Choir 7:30 pm Disciples Women 9:30	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i> OFFICE CLOSED	<i>13</i>
<i>14</i> Moming Worship 10:45 AM Sunday School 9:30 AM Youth Group 3:00 PM	<i>15</i> Martin Luther King, Jr.	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i> Choir 7:30 pm	<i>18</i>	<i>19</i> OFFICE CLOSED	<i>20</i>
<i>21</i> General Board Mtg (after Worship) Moming Worship 10:45 AM Sunday School 9:30 AM Youth Group 3:00 PM	<i>22</i> SFA Young Life 4:45 PM	<i>23</i> House Church 6:00 PM	<i>24</i> Choir 7:30 pm	<i>25</i>	<i>26</i> OFFICE CLOSED	<i>27</i>
<i>28</i> Moming Worship 10:45 AM Sunday School 9:30 AM Youth Group 3:00 PM	<i>29</i> SFA Young Life 4:45 PM	<i>30</i> House Church 6:00 PM	<i>31</i> Choir 7:30 pm			