

***FIRST NEWS***  
*The Newsletter of*  
**First Christian Church**  
*(Disciples of Christ), San Marcos, Texas*

*a place to belong*

*September 2005*

*a place to become*

FROM THE DESK OF JAMES  
INTERIM SENIOR MINISTER

Summer is almost past. Fall is just around the corner. Time flies! Change is the only consistent happening in life. Sometimes I think it would be great if nothing changed. Therefore, everything would remain the same.

However, I am immediately confronted with the irony of no change. There would be all night or all day. There would be all sunshine or all rain. There would be all hot or all cold. There would be all hate or all joy. (Read Ecclesiastes 3: 1 – 8) God forbid---there would be no variation. Everything would remain vanilla with no toppings. After all, who would make the ultimate choices regarding the correct temperature, what color, what season, what living condition, or what stage of life. There would be no need for words like; yes, no, maybe or sometimes. There would be no need for questions akin to, “What is your favorite color?” “What is your favorite flavor?” “What did you do for fun?” “Where did you go for vacation?”

Life is like a kaleidoscope, always changing color and configuration as it turns. Life without change would be boring. Change is good. Adapting to change is less comfortable and often agonizing. The more I consider the freedom change allows and the choices it provides, the more I am convinced that change is good.

God provides change to allow us the opportunity for accepting the “Way”. His Way! It is the choice to love God and to do for others as we would for ourselves. Changeless is His Way! Hence; the meaning of the words found in Hebrew 13: 8, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”

Unwavering faith, unfailing empathy, lasting peace, and eternal Love are on trial in our inner most thoughts and daily living. We are persistently being tested and tried by perpetual change every moment of our existence on earth. It is the temptation that change creates in our life that allows us to choose the changeless opportunity to enter heaven where there is no more sickness, sadness, sorrow, pain, or tears.

Enjoy change! It is the challenge for better relationships, the challenge to find peace and the opportunity to open the “Windows of Heaven.”

Open the door for change and don't expect perpetual permanence. (Stress reducer)

Our Father refreshes us on the journey with some pleasant inns, but will not encourage us to mistake them for home. (C. S. Lewis)

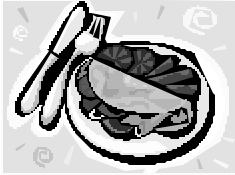
Miracles and Blessings,

*James A. McKibbin*

## Update on the Ministries of First Christian Church Steve Thaler, Associate Minister

### Wednesday Evening Programs Are Cooking!

The Wednesday evening meals, youth meetings, Psalm Kids (K-5), adult Bible studies and Choir rehearsals all kicked off on August 24<sup>th</sup>. If you weren't there I know you'll want to come out this Wednesday to be part of the action with your church family.



**Wednesday Dinners** are delicious home cooked (or church cooked) meals prepared by teams of volunteers so you can have a night off from the kitchen and eat great food at a very low cost (adults \$4, children \$2, families \$10). Much thanks to our Team leaders, Mary Windham, Jackie Cable, Lenore Bolton, Kira Thaler and Robert Pruetz (what a man!).

**Psalm Kids** is a new program for K-5<sup>th</sup> that emphasizes music and active learning. From 6:00 to 6:15 the children have free play time to get the energy out and just have fun. At 6:15 the kids gather in the sanctuary to hear the story of the Bible Character of the week. After this short session they rotate between music, active learning experiences and a brief time of reflection on the activity. The activities include Water Relays, taking Sling Shots at a life size Goliath and constructing an actual family tree! It is a terrific experience for the children and a **wonderful opportunity to invite friends**. If your kids, grandkids or neighbor's kids aren't coming yet, give them an invite.



**Sergeant Shultz Bible Study** is for those who can honestly say, "I Know Nothing" about the Bible. This is Bible Basics at its very best. Conference Room 6:15 – 7:15.

**Song of Songs** is for those who want to learn some Biblical pick up lines for the object of their affection (e.g. Your hair is like a flock of goats descending from Mount Gilead). Let James show you what this romantic book is all about. 6:15 – 7:15 in Fellowship Hall.

### Adult Sunday School Opportunities

#### Sunday Morning (9:30 AM)

**Partnership Class**- Teacher: Linda Veters- Room: Parlor Studying: "Choosing, Losing, Royalty, Loyalty, Wise to Advise" A Study of Kings and Chronicles in the David C. Cook Comprehensive Bible Study series. This is our "Mail Carrier" class. Come rain or snow or dark of night, they are at church. What a faithful and delightful group to be with.

#### **Disciples Class** -Teacher:

Rotates- Room: Fellowship Hall Studying: This class is like 103.5 "BOB" FM, the radio station that plays anything. The Disciple class will study anything and have a great time doing it. Drop in and see what's going on.



#### **Sojourners Class**-Teacher: Joann Schlotter

Room: Conference Room Studying: The Teachings of Jesus directly from the Gospels. The Sojourners have way too much fun for church. They do as much laughing as studying!



**Women's Book Study**-Teacher: Sharon Wiggly Room: 104 Studying: A video directed series called "Nooma" which looks at God's involvement in the every day activities of our lives. Enter at your own risk. Remember, these are the original "Bad Girls".

#### **Homebuilders** - Teacher: To be decided- Room: 110

Studying: They generally study family life application themes, but also enjoy studying the Bible. This is a class of Young Adults, most of whom have munchkins. The mission of the Homebuilders is to support one another in their Christian walk and help make God's Word and principles relevant to real life joys and struggles.

**YANKs** (Young Adults No Kids) If you consider yourself a young adult and you are childless, you are invited to meet during the Sunday School hour (9:30 AM) in Steve's Office to explore the possibilities for beginning a new study. Food will certainly be part of the experience! I look forward to getting to know you better and to introducing you to each other. Call me if you have questions. 396-1926



The October **Newsletter deadline** is *earlier* than usual. Articles **MUST** be turned into Char at the church office by 8:00 AM on Thursday, September 15. Char will be away at a seminar the end of the month and must complete the newsletter early. Articles not in on time, can not be included – **SORRY, NO EXCEPTIONS!** Thank you.

## Board Update



Board meetings are times when good people work together for the church. Very capable folks are making every effort to make things happen, working pretty much under the radar.

I would especially like to thank the members of the Education Committee for working on a plan for Sunday School and for our Wednesday evening time for the children.

The committee has worked hard to come up with a great program for our children which makes for the highest and best use of scarce resources. I do appreciate and applaud the work the Education Committee is doing for the youth at church. We are all strongly committed to providing the best possible experience for our young people.

Since our church is organized to function through committees, the process works best when concerns are passed on to the chairman of the committee. Then, as it completes its work, it brings decisions to the Board. As Board Chairman, I am still learning

what I should do to make this approach work smoothly.

In August at the board meeting, we talked about the need to start looking immediately for our next youth director. No doubt we would prefer to hire a full time youth director who could be totally committed to our youth, but in the immediate future we expect this position to remain part-time.

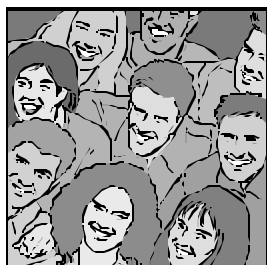
Also, by the end of the year we intend to have a search committee in place to begin the search process for our permanent Senior Pastor. James is really challenging us to define, in objective terms, what we expect from a Senior Pastor. (We are truly blessed with his leadership during this transitional time in the church.) Expectations are that this search could take six months, which would put us into June of '06.

Thanks to all for your good work and support.

**Art Johnson**, Board Chair

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## Youth Happenings from Andrew



Hey everyone! I hope the school year has started out well for you. Our youth program is up and running full-force again, so come be part of our fellowship. D-Groups are rolling again ... Chi Rho on Wednesdays from 6:15-7:15

and, CYF on Sundays from 5:30-7. We'll be tackling all sorts of topics this semester, which will hopefully spur all kinds of good, meaty discussions. Make D-Groups a part of your weekly calendar. *Note:* CYF won't meet on Sunday, September 4.

On Saturday, September 3—that's Labor Day weekend, by the way—we're having a tubing day for the whole youth group, 6-12 grades, AND the '05 seniors who just graduated. It's going to be a casual, come-and-go-as-you-please kind of day. Maggie, Aunt T, and myself will be there all day, starting at 10 a.m., and we'd love to see everyone out there in New

Braunfels. Food won't be provided, so bring munchies and lunchies for yourself. If you can get your hands on a tube, bring it; if you can't, you can rent one for \$11 at the park, along with a \$10 deposit and \$5 for a wristband. Parking may be a challenge—be ready to pay \$5 to park in the lot. The adults and church can help you with money, and let one of us know if you need a ride. Directions: take I-35 south, exit Loop 337/46 (1 or 2 exits past the Canyon Lake exit), turn right on 337, turn left at the light at Common St. (you'll see Rudy's on the corner), go through the light at Union St., go one more block and pull into Prince Solms Park.



Call me if you ever need anything. I hope to see you all a bunch this fall. Andrew

## From Finance / Stewardship:

By virtue of successfully climbing the learning curve over the past several months, our department has created a financial barometer to assist the board and congregation in accurately assessing the past, present and future financial status of the church. I've included an excerpt in the form of several graphs (I am a visual person) included in that report. You will undoubtedly notice that we've seen a year of ups and downs on both the revenue and expense side of the ledger. 2005 has been a challenging year for FCC due to the cost of unexpected items such as transitional expenses, air conditioning replacements and deferred outreach obligations. However, as you can see from the General Fund Donations graph, the congregation has risen to the challenge by increasing their level of giving. This level of commitment has gone a long way in helping to repair our financial stability, but there is still a need as we move toward satisfying our current obligations while providing a solid foundation for the future of this church.

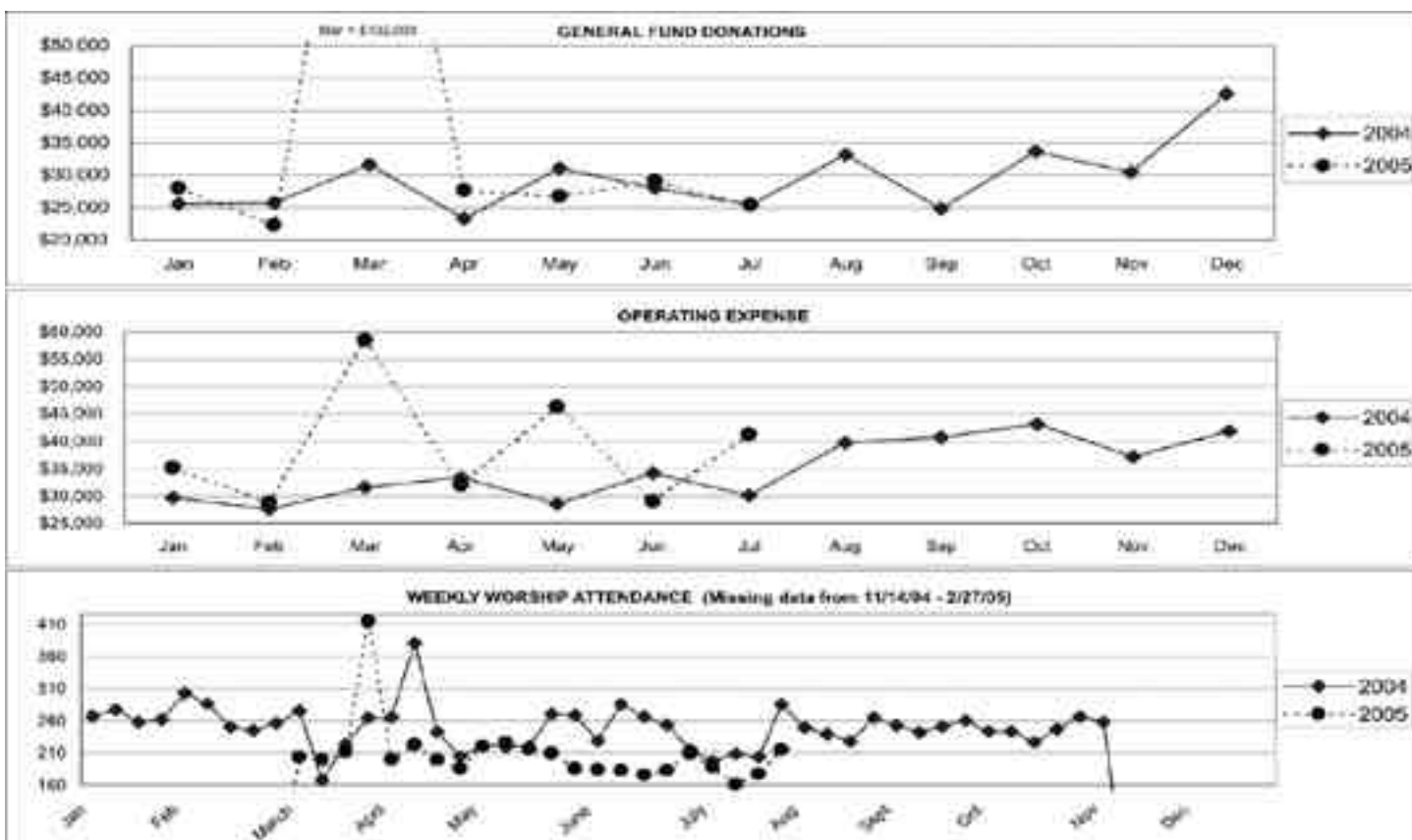
We have finished our first draft of the 2006 budget (a big thanks to all dept heads who participated in this process) and plan to have a discussion with the

board next month concerning this preliminary draft. The primary focus surrounding the 2006 budget process has been to formulate a plan that allows for a replenishment of financial reserves while outlining realistic goals for growth. Additionally, we plan to accompany next year's budget with an overall long range 5 year plan in order to establish some benchmarks moving forward. Once the 2006 budget is complete, we plan to focus more of our time on researching, evaluating and communicating to the congregation alternative solutions for strengthening our financial future (endowments, etc.) – a welcome break from looking at numbers all day.

I cannot thank the members of our department enough for all the hard work they've put forward to date – please take the time to let them know you appreciate their effort – hopefully their enthusiasm and dedication will be contagious!

Finance / Stewardship Dept Members: (Charles Blankenship, Kerry Rash, Barrie Breed, Gary McCaffrey, Gary Swenson, Joe Bostwick, Steve Thaler, John Schneider, Chris & Katherine Carson)

**Chris Carson**



**Bulletin from the Special Ministries Committee** All of you who quilt, knit, or crochet, we need to build our supply of blankets or quilts to go to members of the church who have surgery or are in the hospital. We have enough children's quilts at this time. I think we are down to just 3 blankets for adults. Fifty inches by sixty inches is more than adequate for the size. If you need help or information, please give me a call.  
Thanks, Mary Windham

### Disciples Workshop Offered

If you haven't picked up your Equipping the Saints brochure yet, look for them in the Narthex (or call the church office). There are so many good workshops that there is something for just about everyone. You don't have to be an Elder or Deacon, Pastor or Sunday School Teacher to get something from this great event. The cost is only \$12.00 and that includes a meal as long as you get your reservation in by Sept. 12<sup>th</sup>. The date again for this event is **Saturday, Sept. 17<sup>th</sup>** and it will be held at Hyde Park Christian Church in Austin. We have several who are planning to attend and I will be giving one of the workshops. Time is 9:30 AM – 3:00 PM. I want to see you there.

In Christ's love, Connie Burke.

### Disciples Women's Retreat



I want to share this wonderful opportunity to Retreat and fellowship together. The last weekend in September (**Sept. 30<sup>th</sup> - Oct. 2<sup>nd</sup>**) is the annual DCCI women's retreat in Gonzales, (Yes, this is the same place our children go

and love so dearly.)

The Theme this year is Searching for God's Direction. What a wonderful theme led by a Woman Minister originally from Puerto Rico. There are also several Workshops to choose from that will appeal to everyone.

Last year, 4 of us attended the retreat. I know for me, it was a wonderful spiritually moving time. I'd love for us to at least double that this year with at least 10 going. We can use the church van(s) and carpool, so do not let transportation be a concern. We plan to have one van leave the church at 4, and another a bit later, around 5:30.

**Do you work??** That's OK. **Check in begins at 4pm Friday afternoon and Festivities don't start until at 7pm.**

**Are stairs a concern? Or air conditioning??** Well, the rooms are air conditioned and the lodge is available with hotel like rooms all on 1 floor. AND>>>>> You can pick your own roommate. Just ask a friend to go and request to stay together.

If you have any questions that I didn't answer, just give me, Char or Maggie a call... I hope you'll all consider joining us this year!! Early Bird Registration (by 9/16) is only \$70.

Much love to you all!!

**Kira**

### Calling **ALL** Women of First Christian Church

What: Women's Fall brunch

When: Saturday, September 24<sup>th</sup>  
10am – 12pm

Where: Steve & Kira's house  
(call church office for directions)

Why: Celebrate Women's Ministry  
And Kick off the Fall

RSVP to Kira via the church office  
by Wed. September 21<sup>st</sup>

### Seeking Donations of Luggage.....

Lutheran Social Services operates five residential treatment facilities for children and adolescents.

These children have been referred to us by Child Protective Services because of abuse and neglect. Most of these children come to us with all of their possessions

in a plastic garbage bag. We are trying to get luggage donated so that when a child is discharged from our facilities and are then placed in a foster home they at least have something to put their clothing in as they move to their new foster home. These children have so little - we would like to be able to provide a suitcase/luggage so they can pack their clothes when they leave our care.

If you have luggage to donate, please bring to the church and I will pick up the pieces on Sunday.

Thanks for your generosity.

Betsy Guthrie  
Vice President, Management and Program Support  
Lutheran Social Services  
8305 Cross Park Drive  
Austin, TX 78754  
512-459-1000



# Courage

Price Lecture and Common Experience Events at Texas State University-San Marcos  
September 28, 2005

The Common Experience project at Texas State University is an attempt to engage the university and community in readings, discussions, dialogues, and events that focus on a central theme. Courage is the theme for this fall.

Three events related to this theme scheduled for **Wednesday, September 28** will be of interest to the general public and members of local churches. A morning dialogue and afternoon lecture given by **Professor Monya Stubbs** of the Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary will be followed by an evening address by renowned writer and poet **Maya Angelou**, author of the autobiographical novel *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, poetry such as *And Still I Rise*, and other highly acclaimed works.

As its contribution to the Common Experience project, the Campus Christian Community (CCC) has invited Professor Stubbs to give the 2005 **Price Lecture at 3:00 p.m. at the Campus Christian Community (604 N. Guadalupe)** on the topic "Maya Angelou's Journey of Faith."

The Price Lecture Series was established in 1984 in honor of Mr. H.Y. Price, Jr. through an endowment to the Campus Christian Community. The purpose of the lecture series is to bring to the campus and community quality speakers who will provide spiritual and intellectual stimulation. Mr. Price, who died in 1993, was past president and chairman of the board of the San Marcos Telephone Company and its affiliates and was a generous and active supporter of many worthy causes in San Marcos and Hays County for more than forty years. **He was a member of First Christian Church of San Marcos.**

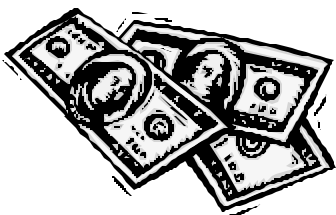
This year's Price lecturer, Monya Stubbs, is an ordained elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and is a candidate for the Ph.D. from Vanderbilt University.

Details for the three September 28<sup>th</sup> events, all free and open to the public, are:

- 11:00 a.m. Philosophy Dialogue, Psychology Building, Room 132
  - "Courage in the Work of Maya Angelou"
  - Professor Monya Stubbs, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary
- 3:00 p.m. Price Lecture, Campus Christian Community, 604 N. Guadalupe
  - "Maya Angelou's Journey of Faith"
  - Professor Monya Stubbs, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary
- 8:00 p.m. Common Experience Lecture, LBJ Student Center Mall
  - "Courage"
  - Maya Angelou, writer, poet, Reynolds Professor of Literature,
    - Wake Forest University in North Carolina

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## Notes from the church office



If you make a purchase on behalf of the church (Wednesday evening meals, educational materials, supplies, repair items, etc.) please be sure to pick up a tax-exempt form to take with you to the store, as churches do not pay sales tax on goods purchased. When being reimbursed for such purchases, the church **will not** reimburse you for sales tax. Forms are available in the church office.

## Bring the World to Your Family Without Leaving Home!

The office has received several requests, from agencies who handle placing high school exchange students, for host families in our area. If you are unable to take a student for a semester, perhaps you would consider becoming "Host Aunts and Uncles". This program supports the students and host families by you inviting the student over for family dinners or taking them to a baseball game.

If this sounds like something you would like to explore, please call the church office for more information. 396-1926

## The Church Library Book Review



Max Lucado had problems titling this book until he and his friends remembered some thoughts he wrote in the last chapter: God yearns for us to come Home, welcomes us lovingly and is maybe so delighted that He will even applaud when we come

through the gate. Incredible? I'm not so sure.

As Brother Lucado took me back over the Beatitudes {Matthew 5:1-10} word for word, but with his descriptive insights, real-people stories, & whimsical imagination my incredulity faded away and I learned anew how all things are possible with our God.

The following inadequate synopsis will not ruin "The Applause of Heaven" for you. There is so much more here.....Truths I will have missed, help I failed to pick up on.

Chapter 1 - God finds joy in satisfying and surprising ways Jesus does impossible things in crazy ways. Things you would think of only in your wildest dreams. Bro. Lucado calls this Sacred Delight.

Chapter 3 - Blessed are the poor in spirit... We are not saved because of what we accomplish or worldly goods amassed. Joy is given to the impoverished spirit, to those who plead for help or mercy.

Chapter 5 - Blessed are those who mourn..... This the strangest path to joy. Mourning for our sins, we find the exquisite sorrow of repentance.....and the comfort of our Father.

Chapter 7 - Blessed are the meek..... Everything about the night Jesus came was ordinary UNTIL God added the "extra" to that word. He likes to use us, common and simple, so He can add the pizzazz!

Chapter 9 - Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness..... We are thirsty for a clean conscience and a fresh start but some of us would rather die than admit it. We stand there, holding tightly to our same old stuff, while each Sunday we are offered The Body and Blood which would set us free.

Chapter 11 - Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy..... Horrible, hurtful things have been done to us. We cry, we fight, we try to get even, not the right way, folks. God asks us to forgive others, so we can come to understand how He forgives us!

Chapter 12 - Blessed are the pure in heart.....We try to change ourselves inside by altering our outside but in order to see God we must first purify our hearts. {And we know Who can look inside our hearts, don't we?} Be sure to read pgs.116 and 117 where Bro. Lucado views the Beatitudes in sequence.

Chapter 14 - Blessed are the peacemakers..... Some one in your life is dealing with the push, shove difficulties of living in this world and could use your help to lighten their load. A kind word, a touch, a bit of understanding could be most welcome, could make your life and theirs better. And in eternity, our King will make you his brother.

Chapter 16 - Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness..... If God has not answered your desperate prayers and you are facing serious doubts, Max Lucado has written this chapter and the next { 17} to help you.....and certainly, me.

So, If we obey God's Laws, improving on our efforts all our lives on Earth, He may just applaud us when we reach Him. You think?

Theresa Casparis

If you would like to do a book review for the coming months, please contact Camille Tracy via the church office at 396-1926.

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## Craft and Gift Shoppe &Help!!!

Our Fall Festival is approaching fast and we have lots of great projects to make but we need workers! Some of you have indicated that you would prefer a daytime work time and some like the evenings. So...here are some work times for September: Tuesday, Sept. 6<sup>th</sup>, 6:30-9:00PM; Tuesday, Sept. 13<sup>th</sup>, 1:00-3:30PM; Tuesday, Sept. 20<sup>th</sup>, 6:30-9:00PM; Sunday, Sept. 25<sup>th</sup>, 12:00-3:00PM (bring your own lunch); and Tuesday, Sept. 27<sup>th</sup>, 1:00-3:30PM. Remember, you don't have to be a talented crafter, just be willing to help. I'm also looking for people to work as cashiers in the Craft & Gift Shoppe at the Fall Festival on October 15<sup>th</sup>. If you can do this please let me know. See you at a work time soon.

Connie Burke, Coordinator  
Craft & Gift Shoppe

## VBS Mission Report

Thank you everyone who participated in the VBS missions. We had four projects and all four were a great success. We have taken 258 lbs of food to the San Marcos Area Food Bank. Their shelves were very low, so the gift was much appreciated. Approximately 100 lbs of dog and cat food were taken to the San Marcos Animal Shelter. These will feed lots of hungry animals over the next few months. 10 Church World Service Heart to Heart Kids Kits were sent to them for distribution in countries which have been hard hit with natural disasters. Another 10 Kids Kits are ready to go to the Southwest Good Samaritan Ministries for children coming through their refugee center or for the orphanage in Matamoros. There were a few extra items given which will also go to the valley. The value of these Kids Kits is almost \$500! Great job!!!

In Christ's love,  
Connie Burke, VBS Missions

## Medicine Box for Tsunami Victims Update

I received a letter from I.M.A. (Interchurch Medical Assistance, Inc.) where we sent the Medicine Boxes for Tsunami relief. Five of our medicine boxes have been sent to Sri Lanka for Tsunami relief. The emergency relief phase has ended for the Tsunami affected areas and now I.M.A. is working with member agencies and partners to support long-term rebuilding and rehabilitation work. One of the paramount concerns of many of the partner agencies is to rebuild the health infrastructure of those regions. Medicine boxes will be a great help in restocking medical facilities and community healthcare programs. It is hoped that the specific healthcare program which receives these boxes will reply when they receive the boxes and I.M.A. will forward these replies. Hundreds of men, women, and children will benefit from the lifesaving and life-enhancing services provided through our congregation. Thank you, once again, for your compassion.

Connie Burke, Coordinator  
Earthquake/Tsunami Relief

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## Membership Directory Updates

Welcome our newest members:

Paul & Crystal Kilby and  
Chandler Endsley  
San Marcos, TX 78666  
Joined: 8/14/2005

### Address Changes:

**Bill & Sharon Kurtz**  
Call church office for an updated address.

**Andrew & Tiffany Chapman**  
Onalaska, TX 77360

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## Ministries and Activities for Singles of San Marcos

■ **Purpose Driven Life** bible study for Singles, offered by San Marcos Singles Ministry – Hosted by First Baptist Church and located in the administration office on Hopkins next to Century-21, and near the little HEB. Tuesday nights at 7 PM.

■ **Hot dogs at Dianna's** - September 10th @ 5:00 – A chance to come together and open your hearts to the needs of singles. Hot dogs provided – bring a dish to share. Call the office to be put in touch with Dianna for more information.

■ **September 13 @ 7:00 pm** – Singles of the San Marcos area Leadership meeting @ First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Call the church office if you are interested in being a representative of FCC at this meeting. 396-1926

## September Lectionary Readings & Liturgical Color

**Sunday, September 4**  
16<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
Green  
Exodus 12:1-14  
Psalm 149  
Romans 13:8-14  
Matthew 18:15-20

**Sunday, September 11**  
17<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
Green  
Exodus 14:19-31  
Psalm 114  
Romans 14:1-12  
Matthew 18:21-35

**Sunday, September 18**  
18<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
Green  
Exodus 16:2-15  
Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45  
Phillipians 1:21-30  
Matthew 20:1-16

**Sunday, September 25**  
19<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
Green  
Exodus 17:1-7  
Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16  
Phillipians 2:1-13  
Matthew 21:23-32

"First News"

Published by

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Steven Thaler, M.Div. \_\_\_\_\_ Associate Minister  
Andrew Chapman \_\_\_\_\_ Youth Director  
Mike Wood \_\_\_\_\_ Interim Chancel Choir Director  
Connie Burke \_\_\_\_\_ Handbell Director  
Margaret Jordan \_\_\_\_\_ Contemporary Music Coordinator  
Char Wood \_\_\_\_\_ Administrative Associate  
Mabel Hall \_\_\_\_\_ Pianist  
Cecilia Pena \_\_\_\_\_ Organist / Accompanist  
Rosie Smith \_\_\_\_\_ Nursery Supervisor  
Lola Bell \_\_\_\_\_ Nursery Caregiver  
Jennifer Flores \_\_\_\_\_ Nursery Caregiver