

THE **WORD**
AND
THE **WORLD**

Article No. 47

BY JIM FRECH
Pastor, Countryside Christian Church

►► The word ‘Christian’ occurs three times in our English Bibles. But the word ‘disciple’ occurs over 250 times. Now, to be fair, most of these appear in the four Gospel accounts of Jesus’ life, referring to the 12 or those who followed Him during His ministry. But in the book of Acts, ‘disciple’ occurs 28 times. It is the most commonly used word for followers of Christ Jesus. A disciple is a student. One who learns. A better word would be ‘apprentice’. A person who voluntarily enters into training underneath the authority and knowledge of a master.

If you claim the name ‘Christian’, that is exactly what you should be doing – daily entering into the School of Jesus. He certainly expected this from those who would trust in Him. With some exasperation in His voice, He asked in Luke 6:46, “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?”

Jesus invites us in Matthew 11:28-30: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

There are too many of us who want Jesus for forgiveness and eternal life, but have little interest in being born again, or ‘being transformed by the renewing of our minds’.

We want Jesus for what he can give us, but where is our heart for growing to be like Him? Maybe there is a desire in our hearts to do so. We’ve just never learned how.

George MacDonald was a Scottish pastor and author in the 19th century. He addressed the person who says, “I believe in Christ, but I don’t know how to become His disciple.”

He simply says, “Get up, and do something the master tells you; so make yourself his disciple at once.”

MacDonald continues, “Instead of asking yourself whether you believe or not, ask yourself whether you have this day done one thing because he said, ‘Do it’, or once did not do something because he said, ‘Do not do it.’

The New Testament book of James even says, “You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!” — James 2:19

But MacDonald doesn’t stop there. He presses: “It is simply absurd to say you believe, or even want to believe in him, if you do not do anything he tells you.”

As Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, ‘Only those who believe, obey. And only those who obey, believe.’

What gets in the way of connecting with God? Obviously, overt sin and poor choices choke out the Spirit’s influence. But that’s too simple. Where Satan gets most of us is in the busyness of everyday life. We may not do bad things. We just don’t have time to do what Jesus says.

This hurried heart even follows us into church on Sundays. Calvin Miller writes, ‘We cannot possibly flatter the Almighty by hurrying into his presence, flinging a song and a prayer at him, and rushing out of church back into our hassled lifestyles. God is never flattered by our sanctified exhaustion.’

Hurry creates anxiety, which produces separation and isolation from God and others. Stress has a way of making us fold inward, away from life-giving fellowship. Maybe we need to stop and take a long, hard look at what we have prioritized. They may not be bad, sinful things, but are they the best things? Are we following Jesus? Or mostly just doing what we want until we get to Heaven?

Jim Frech is the Pastor at Countryside Christian Church, located at 1901 East 4th Street, Pittsburg, Kansas 66762. He can be reached by email at jim.cccpitt@gmail.com or by phone at 620.232.9210. The church holds services on Sunday at 9 am - Traditional Service, 10 am - Sunday School, and 11 am - Contemporary Service.

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County Clerk reviews property tax changes in valuations

CRAWFORD COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING – OCTOBER 9, 2026

BY PHILIP STEVENS
HOMETOWN GIRARD

►► Changes in Kansas personal property tax exemptions have reduced Crawford County’s assessed valuation by approximately \$1.2 million for 2026, according to information presented during the Crawford County Commission meeting on Friday, October 9.

County Clerk Lisa Lusker provided commissioners with a report comparing 2025 and 2026 personal property valuations and outlined upcoming election deadlines and early voting opportunities.

Lusker explained that the report separated personal property into categories and taxing districts, showing both appraised and assessed values and the changes from the previous year.

The approximately \$1.2 million reduction in assessed valuation resulted largely from exemptions involving watercraft, trailers and certain recreational vehicles; items removed by the state legislature.

Lusker said watercraft accounted for a substantial portion of the reduction, while another category that includes mopeds, ATVs, motorcycles and golf carts represented approximately \$500,000 in previously assessed value.

Commissioners questioned how much the reduction would affect county tax revenue. Lusker explained that the actual dollar impact cannot be calculated until tax levies

are established because different taxing districts have different mill levies.

One commissioner observed that the exemptions provide tax relief to property owners but also affect the revenue available to local governments.

Lusker said the report would help explain the changes to residents who question their property taxes and county finances.

Lusker also reminded commissioners of several deadlines and voting opportunities for the November 3 general election.

The deadline to register to vote is Tuesday, October 13. Mail ballots are scheduled to begin going out on Wednesday, October 14, when advance in-person voting also begins at the County Clerk’s Office in Girard.

Voters may cast advance ballots at the Clerk’s Office from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Two additional advance voting locations are scheduled. Voting will be available at the Bicknell Family Center for the Arts in Pittsburg on Monday, October 19, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and at the Homer Cole Community Center in Pittsburg on Saturday, October 24, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Commissioner Carl Wood raised questions about whether Kansas might permit the temporary use of dyed off-road diesel fuel in vehicles operating on public roads, following reports that some states have allowed such use.

Wood said the difference in price could potentially save the county money on fuel used by its road equipment. Commissioners discussed the fuel tax differences between highway diesel and dyed diesel traditionally restricted to off-road applications.

Wood said he would investigate whether Kansas has made any changes to its regulations, possibly through contacts with the Kansas Highway Patrol or local fuel suppliers.

Wood also reported on a recent inspection of the county’s household hazardous waste facility involving representatives of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

Wood said the inspection appeared favorable and that he expected the state to clear the facility.

Once released, Wood said he intends to request assistance cleaning out remaining materials and debris from the property.

Commissioners also briefly discussed the future use of the buildings, including possible equipment storage. Wood noted that one building has roof damage and said further decisions would be made after County Counselor Jim Emerson returned.

During old business, commissioners reported that a county road project in Frontenac was completed, with only minor finishing work possibly remaining.

The city is responsible for the cost of materials associated with its portion of the work.

Commissioners expressed satisfaction with the completed project.

The commission also discussed preparations for upcoming community activities, including tree trimming and other maintenance work ahead of homecoming events in Girard, weather permitting.

Earlier in the meeting, commissioners unanimously approved Lusker’s September 2026 Clerk’s Report following a brief review.

The commission also approved the October 6 meeting minutes and signed the motions approved.

The commission scheduled a work session for Tuesday, October 13, at 9 a.m., and another for Friday, October 16, at 9 a.m.

Also on October 16, Becky Gray, executive director of Building Health Inc., is scheduled to provide an update on the organization’s Care Van transportation program and request a county letter of support for a Kansas Department of Transportation grant application. The grant helps fund the program.

The Crawford County Courthouse was scheduled to be closed on Monday, October 12, in observance of Columbus Day. Commissioners also noted the Girard Fall Festival scheduled for Saturday, October 17.

* * *

County moves toward closing hazardous waste permit

CRAWFORD COUNTY COMMISSION MEETING – OCTOBER 13, 2026

BY PHILIP STEVENS
HOMETOWN GIRARD

►► Crawford County commissioners supported moving ahead with the final steps to close the county’s household hazardous waste facility permit after a state inspection found no violations. The commission also received an advance voting update and called for executive sessions during its short meeting on October 13.

Commissioners Bruce Blair and Carl Wood attended the meeting. Commissioner Tom Moody was absent.

County Counselor Jim Emerson reported that he and Wood met with representatives from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment at the recycling center the previous Wednesday to inspect the household hazardous waste facility.

Emerson said the county received a notice of compliance following the inspection. The report was sent to Topeka for review, and he said the findings put the county in a position to move toward ending its permit.

With commissioners’ approval, Emerson plans to contact Triad, which has assisted the county with the permit over the years, to determine and complete the remaining requirements. He said those steps include a notice for publication in the newspaper and notification to KDHE.

The building still needs cleaning, and some items unrelated to household hazardous waste need to be removed, Emerson said. However, he recommended retaining specialized storage cabinets purchased through the original grant.

The cabinets could be useful if the county later pursues a satellite collection arrangement or a one-time hazardous waste collection. “They’re built specifically for hazardous items,” Emerson said.

Wood also indicated that the favorable inspection was good news as the county works toward closing the permit.

County Clerk Lisa Lusker reminded commissioners that in-person advance voting at the Clerk’s Office would begin on October 14. Her staff was also

preparing mail ballots to send beginning that day.

Lusker said voters could continue requesting advance mail ballots until a week before the election, but she encouraged them to act sooner because of concerns about mail delivery times. Applications received by the office will be processed as they arrive. “So just try to get it in shortly or get to the early voting,” Lusker said.

She also reminded commissioners that October 13 was the voter registration deadline. Paper registrations had to reach the office in person by the end of the business day. Lusker said she believed online registration would remain available until midnight.

Emerson requested a 15-minute executive session concerning an individual employee’s job performance at Explore Crawford County under the exception for personnel matters involving nonelected personnel. The session included the two commissioners and Emerson.

Wood requested a separate 30-minute

executive session involving legal advice about county buildings and insurance, including the recycling center, Health Department and EMS. He said commissioners would need to consider what to do with existing facilities. The two commissioners and county counselor were included in that session.

Upcoming business includes a work session with Wally Wilson of Ryan Insurance at 9 a.m. on October 16.

Building Health Inc. Executive Director Becky Gray is also scheduled to provide an update on the Care Van transportation program on October 16 and request a letter of support for a Kansas Department of Transportation grant application. The grant funds a portion of the program.

Commissioners noted the Girard Fall Festival on October 17 and a ribbon cutting at the Frontenac Community Early Learning Center (Sugar Creek childcare site) at 10 a.m. on October 19.

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