



# The Journey

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[www.fcc-hsv.org](http://www.fcc-hsv.org)

## NOTHING CAN STOP HOPE

Several year ago, at a Leadership Development Retreat that I attended, the Rev. Danny Ginn spoke about the struggle to do God's will in our lives. Rev. Ginn reminded the attendees that letting God become the focus of our lives is a struggle because we are all ego driven. What we want, what other people think, and the image society tells us to conform too, have great influence and it is difficult to continue the process that is necessary for transformation. God prevails in this struggle through unconditional love, acceptance, and humbling grace.

In the gospel of John Chapter 15 Jesus told the disciples that, "You did not choose me but I choose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name." This powerful statement reminds us that everything we have, everything we are, and everything we will be belongs to God. We are chosen to bear the fruit, the good news of Jesus Christ, to the ends of the earth and when we look beyond ourselves for our purpose we find that this is our mission.

Individuals and congregations often shy away from this struggle because they perceive change as a threat and a personal loss. When new ideas and new understandings of the church come forth do we celebrate, or mourn a perceived loss of control and identity within the church. This loss is threatening to the comfortable nature of our community and so we distance ourselves from new ideas until they fade away.

In the past year we seem to have lost more than normal. COVID-19 has changed the way we gather, the way we worship and the way in which we view the world. It has forced us to create different models to communicate with one another, utilizing social media resources, phoning more, sending cards and letters, and caring for others in a new socially distanced environment. It has not stopped the message of Christ and it has diminished the hope we have for the world.

In this season of love we must remember that central to the Good News is the love and acceptance of God. Since we are created in the image of God and are called to pattern our lives on Jesus, he becomes our model of love. Christ's love was open, full of forgiveness and the hope of repentance and so we must model these traits. When we do we will find that the Good News not only spreads through the world but it spreads throughout our being filling us with the love, peace and hope of God.

It is my hope that this New Year is full of light and life and that we will continue to know the presence of God in our church and in our lives. God bless you all, Amen.

### IN-PERSON SERVICES TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED

Due to the surge in Covid-19 infections, we are temporarily suspending in-person services and resuming online Sunday services. The services will remain at 9:30 a.m. and will be live-streamed and then available on our social media accounts. Facebook at: [www.facebook.com/fcchsv/](https://www.facebook.com/fcchsv/), Twitch at: [www.twitch.tv/fcchsv](https://www.twitch.tv/fcchsv), and, YouTube at: [www.youtube.com/channel/UCzQCRY8Vfa-IDhuqUnUhCKw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzQCRY8Vfa-IDhuqUnUhCKw)

Deadline for the *Journey* is **Thursday, January 7** at Noon. Email to: [publisher@fcc-hsv.org](mailto:publisher@fcc-hsv.org)

3209 Whitesburg Drive, Huntsville, Alabama 35802 Telephone: 256-881-0150 **Leave a message.**

### GIVING STATEMENTS

If you want to receive your 2020 Giving Statement please contact the church office either by phone or email. We can send your statement by email or mail, just indicate how you want to receive it.

Thank you for your generosity,  
FCC Office, 256-881-0150 office@fcc-hsv.org

### “ZOOM” INTO A BABY SHOWER

Please join us on Zoom as we celebrate with Kyle and Carrie Love on Sunday, January 10, from 2 -3 pm. Their baby is due in February!

They are registered at babylist.com. If you prefer to buy locally please have your gift to the church office by Noon Friday, January 8.. Let’s shower Kyle and Carrie with our congratulations upon the arrival of their first child!

Zoom link for computers, tablets, and smart phones with internet access <https://>

### JANUARY SERVICE PROJECT FOR CWM

January has traditionally been blanket month for CWM service activity. Once again, CWM is partnering with Church World Service in their Blankets+ program. We are the “+” in the blanket project. FCC in Huntsville, Alabama, can make a difference all around the world as the need arises. \$10 can provide a warm blanket for anyone left homeless by an earthquake or other natural disaster. Please consider a monetary donation to FCC with CWM “Blankets” in the memo line.



Margaret J. Vann

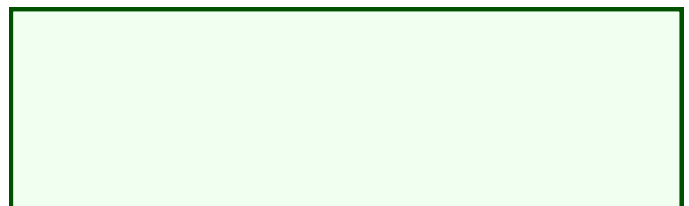
The 2021 sign up chart for **FOOD BASKETS** is available. You may email the office at publisher@fcc-hsv.org or call 256-881-0150 to select a Sunday to remember or honor a friend, loved one, anniversary, birthday, or other special occasion. Donations are \$25.00 with checks made out to First Christian Church and Food Basket on the notation line.



### WEEKLY PRAYER CONCERNS



**Not Published Online**



**REGIONAL PRAYER REQUESTS**  
First Christian Church, Athens, AL

We are temporarily publishing, as space allows in the printed version of the *Journey*, the prayer concerns that are usually listed in the Sunday bulletins. Concerns are listed for one month unless we receive an update. Long term prayer concerns are published monthly in the *Journey*. Send requests to publisher@fcc-hsv.org or call the church office at 256-881-0150 and leave a message. **Please notify the Pastors or the church office if you are going to the hospital and would like to be contacted**

**2020 WORLD OUTREACH GIVING**  
\$25,425.27

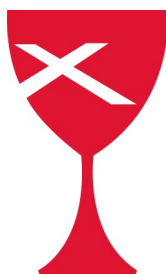


Special Offering / Fund	Given	Percent of Total
DISCIPLES MISSION FUND - budgetted world outreach	\$8,364.13	33%
WEEK OF COMPASSION	\$4,131.14	16%
EASTER OFFERING	\$1,545.00	6%
PENTECOST OFFERING	\$3,045.00	12%
RECONCILIATION OFFERING	\$3,115.00	12%
THANKSGIVING OFFERING	\$575.00	2%
CHRISTMAS OFFERING	\$4,650.00	18%

During 2020, our congregation gave over \$25,000 to Disciples of Christ national and regional organizations for missions and projects in our state, across the US, and around the world. One-third of that amount came from our annual budget. The other two-thirds came from your generous donations to special offerings throughout the year.

May we continue to be generous in meeting needs through World Outreach in 2021!

--Karen Ball, World Outreach Committee Chair



**CHURCH LEADERSHIP**  
**NOMINATING COMMITTEE REQUEST**

A new program year for First Christian Church will begin on July 1, 2021. That may seem a long time in the future, but the time is here to begin the search for leaders. A more detailed request will be forthcoming in a church wide email explaining the process in depth. The nominating committee consists of Holly Ahlbin, Karen Ball, Beverly Cannon, Jim Daniel, Cameron Douglas, and Ann Thompson. Since FCC is not meeting for in person worship during the month of January, the committee asks that you contact them, either by phone or email, with your suggestions to consider for leaders. Please prayerfully consider your willingness to submit your own name to the committee to be considered. I am thanking you in advance for your input.

Nancy Waites

**DELIGHTS OF DISCIPLINE** by John A. Nelson

*Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. - Galatians 3:24-26 (NRSV)*

“Discipline” can be overused. It can mean “giving up fire for form,” as Robert Frost wrote, stifling the free manifestations of inward delight or anguish.

Discipline can be overused when it comes from a disciplinarian with an axe to grind, or from someone whose own insecurity leads them to quash the vibrant spirit of those in their charge. So, “no longer subject to a disciplinarian” can sound like a relief.

But discipline – the steady practices of disciples – can lead to wonders, too. Some time ago at Jacob’s Pillow in the Berkshires, I watched ice dancers gliding, arcing, spinning, leaping through the warm air across a hard plastic that imitated the qualities of frozen water. I marveled at the intensely heartfelt expression, shaped through the discipline of training. It looked like faith: a steady building up of trust in what God has made possible for those bodies. I was bowled over by the creativity of the engineer who came up with the ice substitute. That looked like faith, too: the perception of possibilities in a piece of plastic that could transform an evening.

**Prayer** - O Christ of delightful discipline, may I learn from you the faithful practice that leads to exuberant dance, startling invention, unconditional grace. Amen.