



The Journey

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A NEW YEAR, A NEW VISION

The New Year often brings the need for changes and so we compose New Year's resolutions, promises we make to ourselves that will lead to improvements in our lives. These resolutions can be wonderful, when we stick to them. However, they are often broken. Research shows that as many as 50 percent of adults in the United States make New Year's resolutions, but fewer than 10 percent actually keep them for more than a few months. How often have you make a promise to yourself that you did not keep?

This year I decided to go back to an old standard. I have struggled with my weight since I was a child and Covid-19, being stuck in the house, and having other priorities led to a return of bad habits and I knew I had to combat. Therefore, I am on a diet, and I am exercising every other day, slowing building myself up for more rigorous activity. Right now, I am in that period where the shine of the new diet has worn off and I just feel tired, cranky, and hungry. Patti often reminds me that this was my decision when I complain, and she is right.

Promises are important to keep, to ourselves, to others and especially to God. We are reminded often in the scriptures of the covenantal promises God made to humankind and that God keeps them. We are also reminded of how often we do not keep these promises. Old Testament stories and New Testament parables are filled with examples of those who turn from the will of God, but they are also filled with stories of redemption. It is amazing that God never turns away from us, no matter how angry, fearful, or disinterested we become. Our Creator is always there dusting us off, welcoming us back, and celebrating our successes. During Epiphany, we celebrate the manifestation of God to the world and study the early life of Jesus, but this season is also a reminder of our own journey with Christ, how our decision to follow Jesus has changed our lives and caused us to grow and develop into the people God wants us to be. This is not just something we do as individuals; it is a community exercise. Our congregation takes the time to reestablish our priorities, set goals, seek out what God wants us to be and what we are called to do in our community and world.

In order to put this trust, this mission, into action we need to accept our call to ministry and develop ways to meet our goals. We must ask ourselves, how do we witness to others and make them welcome in our congregation? Are we emulating Christ in our work and searching for God's vision for our congregation? Are we allowing the Holy Spirit to enter, challenge and transform us?

It is only by contemplating these questions and searching for answers that we can fulfill our mission and become the church God wants us to be. We have had a difficult year in our community and our nation but we have still experienced the blessings of God. Now we must continue our journey of faith working together and spreading the love of Christ. Thanks be to God, Amen.

Deadline for the *Journey* is **Thursday, January 28** at Noon. Email to: publisher@fcc-hsv.org

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

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS



NOT LISTED ONLINE



THIS WEEK'S FOOD BASKET is in honor of Kathryn Shrout's 95th birthday.

REMINDER FROM THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

During the month of January, the nominating committee requests that you give prayerful consideration to suggestions for leaders to serve First Christian Church during the program year July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2023. It is the effort of this committee to put forth a strong slate of leaders to guide our congregation forward. Please contact any member of the nominating committee including Holly Ahlbin, Karen Ball, Beverly Cannon, Jim Daniel, Cameron Douglas, Ann Thompson, and Nancy Waites with suggestions and/or questions.

The 2021 sign up chart for **FOOD BASKETS** is available. **You may email publisher@fcc-hsv.org or call the office at 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.

2020 Giving Statements

If you would like 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 wish to receive it.

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

STILL NOT STILL

By Matthew Laney

A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat the boat. ... Jesus rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm.

Mark 4:37 & 39 (NRSV)

Have you ever tried to be completely still? You'd sooner sprout wings and fly.

No matter how static we become, the heart pumps, lungs breath, intestines digest. Our brain produces an endless stream of thoughts, sometimes a trickle, sometimes a fire hose. We fart and blink.

Not even inanimate objects are still: not the rock, not the chair, not the parked car. From the perspective of quantum physics (which I know very little about), subatomic particles are buzzing about at warp speed.

Sedentary or not, everything is a teeming dance of movement. True stillness, therefore, requires divine intervention as today's passage makes clear. Stillness is akin to holiness.

When Jesus stilled the storm, he brought creation to a standstill, to the point of "dead calm," which might have been the brink of non-existence, something only the Creator could pull off. That's the point: Jesus had those creds.

I still recommend sitting quietly, at least once a day. It's the best way I know to encounter the unstoppable miracle of life dancing through me ... and then be moved to praise.

Prayer

Shhhh...



ONLINE WORSHIP SERVICES

Due to the surge in COVID-19 cases, we have temporarily returned to virtual/online services on several online platforms.

Stream live at 9:30 am on Sundays (or watch previous services anytime) on YouTube at: www.youtube.com/channel/UCzQCRY8Vfa-IDhuqUnUhCKw

You may also stream services live on Sundays at 9:30 am, watch previous services, videos for children, and special activities on our Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/fchsv/videos

Finally, stream services at 9:30 am on Sunday at: www.twitch.tv/fchsv



WEEKLY PRAYER CONCERNS



Not Listed Online

We are planning to resume the 9:30 a.m. in Sanctuary worship service on Sunday, February 7, unless there is a significant change in COVID-19 infections.

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



During this time of social distancing, please remember your tithes and offerings. You may use PayPal (click on the Donate button at the bottom of the linked page fcc-hsv.org/who-we-are/how-to-give), drop it off at the church office 9:00 am - 5:00 pm Monday – Friday (please call first, the person on duty may be in another part of the church or at lunch), or mail to:

First Christian Church
3209 Whitesburg Drive
Huntsville, AL 35802

REGIONAL PRAYER REQUESTS

First Christian Church
Dothan, 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**