



## REGIONAL ASSEMBLY APRIL 22-24

This year I plan to attend the Regional Assembly for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Alabama and Northwest Florida on April 22-24. The Regional Assembly is a biennial gathering of representatives from the congregations in our region that meet to share ideas, enjoy fellowship, and undertake the business of the region as a whole. The Assembly also provides opportunities for worship, workshops, youth and children's events, wonderful speakers, and other events that transform lives and encourage the work of ministry.

This year is also special because we were not able to have our Regional Assembly in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. First Christian Church in Meridian, Mississippi, the one church our Region has in Mississippi, has been waiting to host this event for four years. Our church is also allowed delegates for this Assembly, to vote on the business items, and I hope many of you will be able to come and participate in this event.

One of the ways we can support the work of the Alabama and Northwest Florida Region is to attend our assemblies and other programs that the region sponsors. As you know, the region is very supportive of its local churches, providing assistance in finding new ministers, working with churches to solve internal problems, giving leadership and structure to our youth events and summer camps, working with local and regional CWM and CMM ministries, just to name a few.

Did you also know that our Regional Minister, the Rev. Dr. John Mobley, represents us in the College of Regional Ministers and that we have representatives from our region that travel every year for General Board meetings that help guide the policies of our denomination in the United States and Canada? As a member of the Christian Church, you are encouraged to participate in these meetings and help shape the mission of the church.

Please pray for the success of the 2022 Regional Assembly and the safety of all who travel to Meridian. In the following weeks I will be sharing more information about our Regional Assembly, but feel free to go to [nwfldisciples.org](http://nwfldisciples.org), our regional website, for registration information, housing, and more about the worship, mission, and educational opportunities offered. I hope to see you in Meridian in April. Amen.



**CONGREGATION MEETING**  
Sunday, March 27, following the 9:30 am Worship Service. 2022 Budget Update and Rev. Paul Allen's Sabbatical.

Deadline for the *Journey* is **Thursday, March 10**, 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.**

**CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)  
HISTORY AND THEOLOGY**



**SHORT TERM  
PRAYER CONCERNS**



Dear Friends,

Studying the history of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has always been a wonderful way to learn about our denomination and our theology. It helps us to reconnect to the dreams of our founders but also prepares us to look to the future and our own vision for what our congregation and the Church can be. With this in mind, I will be teaching a History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) including a discussion of our Theology and Practices. This course will be four to six sessions, depending on how fast we move through the curriculum. I will be using Denominational Materials, "A Handbook for Today's Disciples" by D. Duane Cummins, and "Disciples: Who We Are and What Holds us Together" by Michael Kinnamon and Jan Linn.

The class will be held on **Monday evenings at 6:00 pm beginning on March 21st** and should be about an hour. If you have any questions feel free to contact me at the church office. I look forward to seeing you.

Grace and Peace,  
Rev. Paul Allen

**CHURCH CALENDAR**

- Mar. 7 10:30 am Quilters
- Mar. 8 6 pm Elders' Meeting
- Mar. 9 6 pm Men's Group  
Phoebe Circle  
7 pm Choir Rehearsal
- Mar. 10 10 am *John, Gospel of Light & Life*  
6 pm Board Meeting
- Mar. 13 2 am **Daylight Saving Time Begins**  
11:45 am Community Outreach Mtg.
- Mar. 14 9:30 am Esther Circle  
10:30 am Quilters  
5 pm Conveners' Meeting

**ATTENDANCE**

Ash Wednesday: 51  
March 6 Worship Service: 70  
Small Groups (During the week & Sunday): 32

**Not Published Online**

We are temporarily publishing, as space allows, the prayer concerns that are normally 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 to leave a message.

**Please notify the Pastors or the church office if you are going to the hospital and would like to be contacted**

**REGIONAL PRAYER REQUESTS**

First Christian Church  
Decatur, AL



**THIS WEEK'S FOOD BASKET** is in memory of Bess Smith, mother of Susan Sulkowski.

**IN PERSON & ONLINE WORSHIP SERVICES**

We offer in-person worship services Sunday mornings at 9:30 or you may also stream them live at 9:30, or watch previous services anytime, on [facebook.com/fcchsv](https://facebook.com/fcchsv), [twitch.tv/fcchsv](https://twitch.tv/fcchsv), or [Youtube.com](https://Youtube.com).

### NATIONAL CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER (NCAC)

One of the Christian Women's Ministries' service projects for March is the Healthy Families program at the NCAC. Healthy Families is a parent support program for first-time parents living in Madison County. It offers family support and education services that begin in the last trimester of the pregnancy or before the baby is 1 month old and may continue until the child begins kindergarten.

Please consider a monetary donation to this program, marking your check "NCAC Healthy Families" in the memo line .

Thank you! Christian Women's Ministries

### RUMMAGE SALE UPDATE

Hello all!

I have received many questions about this year's rummage sale. As many of you know, the rummage sale is a huge ordeal that requires the volunteer efforts of many of our church members and staff. It is also important to note that I am pregnant and due on the week/weekend of the rummage sale's typically stated date. COVID is still taking a toll on the community as well. With these factors prayerfully considered, the Christian Education Committee and the staff had discussions about this event for the 2022 year and decided it is best to not hold the event. However, we still do encourage donation of items to charitable causes and wanted to share some resources to help make this easier for you! :)

[www.rocketcitymom.com/huntsville-thrift-stores-donation-centers/](http://www.rocketcitymom.com/huntsville-thrift-stores-donation-centers/) this link has a great list but here are a few hand picked locations!

#### A New Leash On Life Marketplace

707 Andrew Jackson Way NE, Huntsville, AL 35801

#### Downtown Rescue Mission Thrift Stores

(will also pick up items from your home; call 1-855-376-7283) 1407 A N. Memorial Parkway, Huntsville, AL 35801 Or 8006 Old Madison Pike, Ste 10, Madison, AL 35758

**Goodwill of Huntsville** 8501 Whitesburg Drive, Huntsville, AL 35802

Alyssa Burton,  
Youth Director

### CONGRATULATIONS 2021 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR:

#### DICK CHRISTIANSEN

Each year, Burritt on the Mountain recognizes a volunteer who goes above and beyond to assist guests and staff. This year, we celebrate Dick Christiansen who has given 589 hours of his valued time sharing his skills and talents. For his dedication, he has earned the President's Volunteer Service Gold Medal Award. In 2020, Dick joined Burritt's volunteer team helping with our Adopt-A-Mile program. He has made a huge difference on the drive up the mountain on Monte Sano Blvd. keeping the roadway clean and picking up litter. His efforts make the drive so welcoming to Burritt and the mountain community. Dick also maintains 4 miles of hiking trails on Burritt's property by clearing deadfall and keeping the trails safe. He says "Walking the mountain is far more enjoyable than exercising at the gym!" We greatly appreciate Dick's efforts to help fulfill Burritt's mission to enhance lives in our community.

#### LANDSCAPE TEAM AT WORK

The beautiful weather let the landscape team get in some great work last week.

Duffy Boles manicured the Thomas and Martin Islands. They have never looked so good under my care. John Hall cleaned up the Courtyard and cleaned the fountain of a great Springtime look. Thanks Guys. Earlier, Dick Christiansen cleaned out the flat roof gutters so those leaves stopped falling into the Courtyard. He also maintains the Bell Tower front garden.

I put out a call for some helpers to reduce the amount of work I was putting into the landscaping and several members have responded. **I still have a few gardens to offload on some willing volunteers.** Give me a call at \*\*\*\*\* or email at \*\*\*\*\*.

Bob Senn, Landscaping Committee Head

The 2022 sign up chart for **FOOD BASKETS** is available. **You may call the office at 256-881-0150 or email [publisher@fcc-hsv.org](mailto:publisher@fcc-hsv.org) to select a Sunday to remember or honor a friend, loved one, anniversary, birthday, or other special occasion.** Donations are \$25.00 and go to Community Outreach. Make checks payable to First Christian Church and Food Basket on the notation line. You may also make your payment through PayPal and designate Food Basket through our website [fcc-hsv.org/who-we-are/how-to-give/](http://fcc-hsv.org/who-we-are/how-to-give/)

## CAN I GET A WITNESS?

By Liz Miller

*Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white.*

Matthew 17:1-2 (NRSV)

Not every mountaintop experience belongs to us. Sometimes we are called to witness someone else's big moment.

Seeing a loved one cross the graduation stage after watching them struggle through school with dogged persistence. Listening to your bestie recount every minute of a magical first date after months of hearing the angst of a simmering crush. Cradling your sister's perfect, squishy baby after holding her grief from miscarriages and invasive fertility treatments.

Eventually they have to come down the mountain. Another rejection from a hoped-for job makes them wonder if the degree was worth it. The honeymoon ends and the bestie asks how you know when to fight and when to walk away. The baby becomes a threenager and your sister questions all her parenting choices.

In those moments, you remind them of what you saw on the mountaintop. You tell the story of the transformation they have long since forgotten. You help them see the sparkle buried under the layers of sweat and tears and spit up. You tell them, again and again, that they are beloved.

Jesus didn't go up the mountain alone. He took witnesses. He knew there would come a time when he would be criminalized, deserted, and left for dead. It was up to the witnesses to tell the mountaintop story, of a Savior who dazzled them and of the Son of God, who was beloved.

### Prayer

Dear God, from the valleys to the mountaintops, thank you for witnessing the story of our lives. Amen.

## DO WE TRUST GOD?

Rev. Paul J. Allen IV

Sermon: Mar. 6, 2022

Scripture Verses:

Romans 10: 5-15

We live in a cynical world where it is hard to trust anyone. In the past, we believed in our leaders and heroes and thought that they had our best interests at heart, but time and time again our faith has been shattered by broken promises and outright lies, to the point where it is difficult to trust anyone in authority.

Yet there are examples of those who have complete faith, complete trust in someone. When I think of complete trust I think of, my daughter Abby. When she was a child she was not afraid of heights and loved to climb to the highest point that she could and yell, "Daddy catch!" as she leap into the air.

She always trusted that I would catch her, even when I was caught by surprise, and I made some pretty spectacular catches if I do say so myself. This game did wonders for my reaction time. All of this ended the day that I missed. She was three and was standing on the couch when I came into the living room and jumped at me and I was just too slow, I could not catch her in time and she hit the floor.

We were lucky, she was fine with not a scratch or bruise to show for it. But she never did that again. Oh, she would ask me to catch her but she would always make sure I was ready and even then sometimes she would hesitate. She lost that sense of trust even if she gained wisdom.

In today's scripture passage Paul speaks about a leap of faith that we all make, but to fully understand the lesson, we have to go back to Paul's discussion about the Israelites in chapter 9. It is clear that Paul loved the Jewish people and was convinced that God loved them as well. But Paul was also confused and heartsick about the unbelief of his people.

Those who were given the Laws of Moses, chosen to be the elect among the peoples of the earth and to strive for righteousness, did not succeed in fulfilling the Spirit of the Law. They had not recognized their Messiah, whom they had prayed and

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...Trust continued from page 4 longed for, and even tried to suppress the religion, born from their faith, who believed that the Messiah had come.

This passage is a moment of honesty and soul searching as Paul asks a simple question, "How can this be?" He answered that the Israelites had become so bound by the Law that it become an idol. They believed that the Law was the final expression of who they needed to be as a people and forgot its original purpose.

When God gave the law to Israel it was to engender trust, but the people misunderstood this and instead saw the Law as a matter of works, in other words, they had to follow these rules to be clean and acceptable in the eyes of God.

Paul had seen the inadequacy of this kind of belief in his own life. It was based on human strength, on our ability to keep the law, and quite simply we are not able to do this. If we believe only in our strength we cannot have a real relationship with Christ because we think that faith is just about us.

The problem with the Law is that if one depends on it as the basis of their relationship with God then that is the only relationship they will have. It depends on their trustworthiness rather than God's; their works and deeds, rather than God's grace, and so it cannot be a stable or real relationship.

The basis of a right relationship with God has to be complete trust. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ was proof that God wants to connect with us and that God's promises are sure. It is Jesus, not the Law, who is the basis for our trust in God because he is an end to the belief that the Law is a means of salvation. He is the incarnation of the goal of the Law, the demonstration of God's faithfulness to creation.

Paul's point is that both the Law and Jesus lead us to trust God, but they do it in different ways. The command in verse 13, to call on the name of the Lord, is a quote from the Old Testament prophet Joel, which establishes the authority of the Old Testament for the early and future Church.

Yet, in verses 9 and 10 Paul tells us that words alone are not sufficient for salvation. Yes, we must

confess with our lips that Jesus is Lord, but we must also believe in our hearts that God raised him from the dead.

Words are not enough, we have to believe that God leads us, that God has our best interests in mind, and have to trust that God knows what is right for our lives and for the world. Anything that lays aside this burden of trust is just self-absorption.

Of course we are always tempted to be something other than the faithful and grateful people we are meant to be. We will always question our beliefs, and more importantly, we will question the beliefs of others, so we can take the heat off of ourselves.

Paul makes it clear to the church in Rome that while Israel was chosen by God, Christ's life, death, and resurrection revealed that God's grace is so overwhelming it must include the Gentiles. There is now no distinction between Jew and Greek, slave or free, woman or man, for we are all made one in Christ Jesus.

If we see each other through this sense of oneness, we understand that the old questions of clean and unclean, sinner or redeemed, even saved or unsaved are not ours to answer. It is God who justifies, God who redeems, and God who saves, not us. Instead, we are called to trust God to deliver us from the bondage of prejudice and preoccupation with self.

Of course, Paul does not end the discussion here. Instead of judging others, we are called to share the Good News so that they will hear of the wonderful work of Christ. How can people be taught to trust God if we do not offer them a model? How can we ask others to believe if we do not truthfully tell them about our own experiences? How can people be brought to faith if they cannot see how grace affects our lives?

We have to be vocal about our beliefs. Anything else is inauthentic to our calling and once again shows a lack of trust in God. Our faith is worth sharing!

But rather than using our beliefs as a bludgeon and spreading the gospel through fear we are called to model our faith and show others, in our everyday

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...**Trust** continued from page 5.

lives, what it means to be a follower of Christ.

In a world that does not trust easily this can be difficult, which is why we have to be patient and consistent. Just as Paul grieved about the unbelief of the Jewish people so too do we grieve when we see and hear those who have heard but choose not to follow.

However, Paul remained convinced that one day his people would understand and believe and we have to have the same kind of faith. Our words and deeds might not bear fruit that moment, that hour, or that day, but if we carefully tend the garden we will see results.

A few years ago I took something of a leap of faith. Some of you know that I am afraid of heights, it comes from falling off the roof so much as a child. However, I try not to let this fear consume me so I actively combat it by doing things that put me in high places.

I ride roller coasters and water slides. I have bungee jumped and done the human slingshot. But a few summers ago I did something I always wanted to do, I skydived. I jumped out of a perfectly good airplane and I loved it. The worst part was not the jump itself that was exhilarating, it was the ride up. It took about twenty minutes for the plane to hit altitude and they were some of the longest minutes of my life.

Looking back it makes sense. I was afraid of what could happen, afraid of falling, and afraid that I would not have the courage to jump. When I made the decision it was easy and when the chute opened and I gently glided down I realized how foolish my fears were.

This is what taking a leap of faith is all about, trusting God even when everything, including our brains, scream that we will fail. Do we trust God? When we step out into the unknown and expect to glide gently down? Let's take a chance together, and see. Thanks are to God, Amen.

## COVID-19 CHURCH PROTOCOLS

- **One 9:30 a.m. service** will be offered at least through May 2022. First Christian Church offers virtual services ([facebook.com/fcchsv](https://facebook.com/fcchsv), [twitch.tv/fcchsv](https://twitch.tv/fcchsv), or First Christian Church Huntsville on YouTube) every Sunday. While FCC and State recommendations are good benchmarks, we invite all people to worship with us based on their comfort level.
- **Enter the church through the Bell Tower Garden/Narthex doors.** The doors by the church office are locked.
- **Wearing face coverings/masks at all times inside the church is encouraged for everyone.**
- Hand sanitizer and masks are available at the Lobby Welcome Table along with prepackaged communion elements.
- The **nursery** is open for the 9:30 a.m. service and the 10:30 a.m. small group time.
- **Every other row of pews is roped off on the pulpit side of the sanctuary to allow individuals to practice social distancing so that they may worship at their level of comfort. The front section on the pulpit side is the least impacted zone with our heating and cooling system.**
- **Attendees may vocalize** during the service, such as stating the Lord's Prayer, litanies, etc., and sing hymns/songs when lyrics are projected on the screens.
- Offerings may be placed in the brass plate when exiting the sanctuary or sent by mail.
- **Coffee is temporarily suspended.**
- **Small groups** (including Sunday school classes) will meet at **8:30 a.m. or 10:30 a.m.**
- Anyone with any symptoms will remain home and celebrate virtually for at least 10 days
- **Please notify the church office immediately if you develop symptoms after attending a service.**

## WANTED!

A few men to join us in our Men's Bible Worship group, Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. in the Garden Room. We are currently studying the Early Church series by Ray Vander Laan. Come join us for a freewheeling discussion and exchange of ideas on the title subject matter and many other topics.