



The Journey

Volume XXIX No. 10
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SPRING

It is strange to think that only a few weeks ago we were still wearing our winter coats and the sun was going down before we sat down to supper. Now flowers are blooming, the birds have returned, and the trees are starting to bud. Spring is not around the corner, spring is here, even if the weather is still not cooperating on some days.

In my backyard the Daffodils are beginning to bloom. I have mentioned before that I do not have much of a green thumb, especially when it comes to flowers. However, every home I have lived in has had Daffodils, in part because they are so hardy and easy to grow, but also because Daffodils represent spring to me. My mother used to plant Daffodils at our home in North Carolina. I can still remember planting the bulbs, which I thought looked like shriveled up onions, into the soil during the fall. My mother told me they would grow to be beautiful flowers in the spring, and I can remember not really believing her, until the green shoots burst out of the ground and the beautiful yellow flowers blossomed in the still cool air. To me, it was kind of miracle, that such a delicate looking flower would come back year after year, fighting through the cold ground to the warm sun.

In the church when we think of spring we think of Easter and the renewal it brings, however we are still in the season of Lent, reflecting on our lives and bringing before God our sin and brokenness. This time of contemplation is leading us to the ideals of transformation and rebirth found in Easter. In our Sunday morning worship services, even though the communion table is draped in black, the candles are missing, and the cross is hidden, there is still a joyful spirit, because we know that soon our time of mourning will be over and our faith will be renewed.

On March 28 we will celebrate Palm/Passion Sunday, an opportunity to remember the crowds cheering for Jesus as he entered Jerusalem, but also a time when we look ahead to his last week on earth and the cross looming in the distance. Then on April 1 we will gather together on Maundy Thursday, at 7:00 pm, for a service to remember the Last Supper and Good Friday. It is easy to allow the joy of the resurrection to overshadow the sacrifice of the cross but you cannot have one without the other, there can be no faith without sacrifice and we will remind ourselves of this that evening.

All of these events either help us to prepare for or realize the significance of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross and his resurrection for the sake of the world. Such a gift is not to be taken lightly, but treasured and allowed to nourish our souls so that through our words and our lives others may see the love of God revealed. Let us take a lesson from the Daffodil, that even in what we see as a cold and dreary world, light and warmth can be found if we reach up and out to God. This year let us all experience the joy and renewal that Easter brings. Amen.

Deadline for the *Journey* is **Thursday, March 18**, at Noon. Email to: publisher@fcc-hsv.org

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

We have resumed our **9:30 a.m. Sunday in Sanctuary worship service.** The service will be broadcast live to the church parking lot and streamed on line (streaming information is below).

**WEEKLY
PRAYER CONCERNS**



Not Published Online

ONLINE WORSHIP SERVICES

We have resumed in-person worship service but you may still stream live at 9:30 am on Sundays (or watch previous services anytime) on YouTube at: www.youtube.com/channel/UCzQCRY8Vfa-IDhugUnUhCKw

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/fcchsv/videos

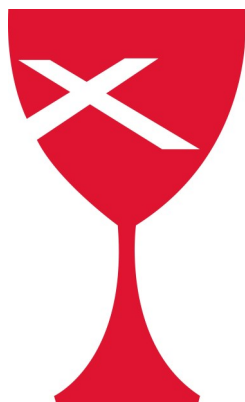
Finally, stream services at 9:30 am on Sunday at: www.twitch.tv/fcchsv

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER

One of CWM's service projects for March is the Healthy Families program at the National Children's Advocacy Center. 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 and dropping in the Sassafras bowl at church or mailing to the church office.

Thank you! Mary Ann Anderson



CONDOLENCES

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

CWM BLESSING BOXES DUE

Ladies, the money you have collected for the Blessing Box ministry is due in March. You can contribute whatever you wish as you count your blessings from this past year even if you did not keep a special blessing box. This money is contributed to the Disciples Mission Fund with half of the donations going directly to the International Disciples Women's Ministries. Your giving makes a significant difference in the mission of the church at home and abroad. Please make your donation at your March Circle meeting or in your FCC offering noting Blessing Box in the memo line.

Blessing Box Dedication Prayer:

Dear God, giver of everything, use these gifts which we present. May they show forth your love and our faith in ways beyond our thoughts, sight, and imagination. Make us one as we go forth in your service. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

- Sue Alexander, East Side Christian Church, Longview, Texas

ECM REGISTRATION FOR SUMMER AND FALL 2021

Know anyone looking for day care or pre-school? A few openings are available, depending on age and type of care, to the public on first-come first-served basis. If you someone looking, ask them to contact Susan Cooley at 256-881-4291 or susan@fcc-hsv.org for more information.



The 2021 sign up chart for **FOOD BASKETS** is available. **You may call the office at 256-881-0150 or email 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, with checks made out to First Christian Church and Food Basket on the notation line, and go to Community Outreach.



CHURCH CALENDAR - MARCH

The following are the known* church related activities.

- 17 St. Patrick's Day 
- 18 10 am Bible Study - The Walk
- 24 9 am Breakfast Bunch
- 25 10 am Bible Study - The Walk
- 28 9:30 am Palm Sunday Service- Easter Egg "hunt" following service (details TBA)

April

- 1 10 am Bible Study - The Walk
- 7 pm Maundy Thursday
- 4 9:30 am Easter Service
- 5 10:30 am Quilters

* Previously, activities were listed on the calendar based on Facility Requests submissions. Some meetings are now being conducted virtually, or in other ways, so the church office has no way of knowing that those meetings are occurring. Please contact the church office (256-881-0150 or publisher@fcc-hsv.org) if you would like your group or committee, including the point of contact, included on the calendar.

SMALL GROUP MEETINGS AT CHURCH

Small groups, a **maximum of 10 people**, are allowed to meet inside the Church, usually in **Family Services**. Meetings must be at least one hour apart to allow the room to be treated by our needle point bi-polar ionization system (Covid-19 protection) and between the hours of 9:00 am and 5:00 pm. Monday - Friday. Use the exterior Family Services doors, located in our Bell Tower Courtyard on the west side of the church, to enter Family Services. The door will be unlocked for your meeting. Call the Church Office at 256-881-0150 to reserve Family Services. Limited arrangements may be possible for larger groups.

We ask that:

- The meeting has no more than 10 people.
- All participants will wear a mask.
- You follow social distancing procedures.
- You record the names of all participants.

FINDING GOD IN THE LAST PLACE WE LOOK

By Matt Laney

⁴⁸ When his parents saw Jesus [at the temple], they were astonished; and his mother said, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you with great anxiety." ⁴⁹ Jesus said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Parent's house?"

Luke 2: 48-49 (NRSV)

It's bad enough that tweenage Jesus ditches Mary and Joseph without so much as a text message. But when Jesus' understandably distraught parents find him in the temple days later, Jesus makes his absence their fault while belittling their role: "Didn't you know I would be in my Parent's house?"

Why would Luke waste precious parchment and ink on a story in which Jesus appears to break the fifth commandment about dishonoring parents?

Maybe it's there to comfort countless parents ever since, demonstrating that even young Jesus thought his folks were nitwits. Or maybe it's a reminder that we sometimes find God in the last place we look: in church!

Of course, God can show up anywhere. But it's not uncommon for people to arrive to Sunday worship looking for God after all other options have been exhausted. I've seen many a visitor in tears within minutes of worshipping at the church I serve - surprised, delighted, relieved to find Holy Love.

Keep watch for that person this Sunday and next Sunday and the one after that - yes, even online. You have a role to play in revealing the presence of God. You can assure someone that love is not lost.

Prayer

Dear God, who was lost but will be found again and again, may I never stop looking for you.

Sanctuary Service Protocols

- In person worship is at 9:30 a.m.
- Sunday school classes, the nursery, children/youth gatherings, coffee, and other hospitality services are currently suspended.
- While FCC and the State recommendations are good benchmarks, we invite all people to worship with us based on their comfort level. Virtual services are offered (facebook.com/fcchsv, twitch.tv/fcchsv, or First Christian Church Huntsville on Youtube) every Sunday.
- **Attendees, including children, will wear face coverings/masks inside the church and practice social distancing (6 feet apart for non-household members) for everyone's safety.**
- Attendance is limited (approximately 75) to the ability to social distance and the service will be broadcast (107.9) to the parking lot in the event of overflow attendance.
- Enter the church through the Bell Tower Garden/Narthex doors. The doors by the church office will be locked.
- Greeters will provide hand sanitizer to all who enter and provide masks for those who have not brought their own.
- Ushers will seat people down the center/side aisles
- No choir/congregational singing.
- Following the service, rows will **leave by the side aisles** with the east aisle exiting through Family Services and the west aisle through the Narthex doors. (There will be directional signs.)
- Offerings may be placed in the brass plate when exiting the sanctuary or sent by mail.
- Please, **no congregating indoors** before or after service - social distancing outdoors.
- **Anyone with any symptoms will remain home and celebrate virtually for at least 14 days.**
- **Notify the church office immediately if you develop symptoms after attending a service.**