



JOURNEY SUMMER PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

With Pastor Paul's sabbatical and the summer season, *The Journey* will be published on the first and third Monday of the month **starting June 6**. Also, *The Journey* will **not be published** the week of May 30 due to the Memorial Day holiday.

THE CHURCH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED ON MONDAY, MAY 30, IN OBSERVANCE OF MEMORIAL DAY.

TURNING STRUGGLE INTO STEADFASTNESS (2022 Pentecost Offering)

Throughout our history, the Stone-Campbell movement has been marked by courageous leaders called to create communities rooted in God's mission. Disciples have answered this call by establishing new churches through organic and affiliating growth in the United States and Canada. It is through partnerships with all the expressions of the Church, financial stewardship, missional transformation, and the faithful call and development of new leaders that Disciples continue to change the world.

The 2020 Vision, former General Minister and President Dick Hamm's priorities to guide the Church in the early 2000s, included a commitment to new faith communities. This was not new to Disciples, but it pushed the Church to go further and more intentionally than it had done before. In the first ten years of the 2020 Vision alone, Disciples started and affiliated more congregations than during any decade in its history. In 2020, Disciples celebrated welcoming more than 1,000 faith communities to the Table and surpassing the goal set in 2001.

Even with this success stories of struggle are nothing new to the church. From the persecution faced by early Christians to civil rights movements led by faith leaders, the church has found its strength in times of unrest. The COVID-19 pandemic is yet another chapter in this long history, both nothing unique and yet entirely different. Through it all, Disciples have been steadfast. By launching emerging congregations, they have stepped up to care for communities in need. But they don't do it alone.

With the help of regional and general ministries, these brave leaders have been provided with facilities to conduct their outreach activities and with online educational opportunities, such as Leadership Academy. By making a gift to the **2022 Pentecost Offering, received in most congregations on Sundays, May 29 and June 5**, you can ensure that the new church movement continues to prosper in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). (Please note "Pentecost Offering" on your check or PayPal donation to support these ministries.)

Each year, half of these gifts go to your own region to support local new church development. The other half goes to New Church Ministry, which trains, equips, assists, and multiplies new church leaders across the United States and Canada through programs such as coaching, New Church Hacks, and Water the Plants. Planning, nurturing, and sustaining new places of worship is part of the Disciples' vision - participation in this Special Day Offering helps this vision come to life. Please give generously to this year's Pentecost offering.

Deadline for the *Journey* is **Thursday, June 2**, at Noon. Email to: publisher@fcc-hsv.org

3209 Whitesburg Drive, Huntsville, Alabama 35802
Telephone: 256-881-0150

GRATEFUL LIFE COMMUNITY CHURCH SUPPORT

Christian Women's Ministries is asking for financial support for Grateful Life Community Church during May. This church, our sister Disciples congregation in Huntsville, serves the disadvantaged and homeless members of our community. If you would like to contribute, please write your check to FCC with Grateful Life in the memo line and mail it to FCC.

Thank you.



SHORT TERM PRAYER CONCERNS



Not Published Online



The Vine Pastoral Counseling Center is having their annual Branches of the Vine

fund-raising event on Thursday, June 16 at Baron Bluff, Burritt on the Mountain. Join us in-person for an evening filled with wonderful fellowship, live music, tapas, wine tasting and a live auction. (A virtual auction will run from June 4 - June 9 at www.vinepcc.com) The money raised is used to help provide healing and comfort to anyone regardless of ability to pay.

If you received an invitation please consider purchasing tickets or making a donation. If you did not receive an invitation please contact Lynn Abernathy at 256 655-4114 for more information. RSVP by June 6.

75TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Huntsville will be celebrating its 75th anniversary on October 9, 2022. Included in our plans is putting together a booklet for the occasion. We invite you to share your memories of being a member of the church. Your essay could be 100 words or more and please include approximate years in your descriptions where possible. If you have old pictures of our early days, please share them too. (If you have printed pictures we will scan them and return them to you.) I need your memories, pictures, etc. by August 1. You may send them to trilliumjv@att.net or drop them off at the Church Office.

Thank you,
Margaret J. Vann,
Chair 75th Committee.

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
Mt. Zion Christian Church
Hayneville, AL



This QR code is linked to the Church's PayPal giving page for your convenience.

SPRING IS NOT SAFE by Molly Baskette

“For now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come.”

Song of Songs 2:11 (NRSV)

Spring is fragile. It’s not safe and strong at the root like summer is. Spring blabs on and on about its “new life” this and “new life” that, but let’s tell the truth: things that are trying to get born or give birth in spring don’t always survive.

When my daughter was 7, she found a baby bird in our vegetable bed. It was alive, but very frail. It had probably blown there out of a tree in the previous day’s windstorm.

“Mom, it’s amazing! I can see all its bones because it’s naked! Can we try to help it?” It was a nestling, eyes shut tight, all beak and bones and skinny butt, shifting slightly but not making a sound. It was alive.

“Honey, I hate to tell you this, but it’s probably going to die. A lot of creatures and plants die in spring—they’re just not strong enough to be here,” I said.

Undeterred, she ran to get a plastic Tupperware, lined it with toilet paper, and gently lifted the bird into it.

Ernest Hemingway once wrote that “the world breaks everyone and afterward many are strong at the broken places. But those that will not break it kills.” He didn’t write that everyone becomes strong at the broken places. Just that many are. What makes the difference between someone who is stronger at their broken places, and someone whom the breaking, just breaks?

Perhaps it’s as simple as: someone to notice, and lift you up gently, and believe that you will live, until you do.

Prayer - God (on this Mental Health Sunday no less): when we have fallen, send someone to lift us up. And everywhere we go, may we be the lifter-uppers. Amen.

ATTENDANCE

May 22 Worship Service: 73
Small Groups (During week & Sunday): 23



JUNE BIRTHDAYS



Not Published Online



High School

Sarah Brockway, Ty Davis, Cara Sexton, & Walker Wilson

University

Stan Ball, Alyssa Burton, Janie Clasgens, Brady Johnson, Katherine Mackenzie, & Brandon Rutledge

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 pervious services anytime, on facebook.com/fcchsv, twitch.tv/fcchsv, or Youtube.com.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH JUNE PROJECT

WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

The Community Outreach Committee's project for June is collecting financial donations for the Foster Care Unit of DHR (Department of Human Resources). There are over 400 children in foster care in Madison County and funding is not adequate to cover all their needs. These children are in care through no fault of their own; they have been abused and neglected by those who should have protected them. Community Outreach, with your help, would like to ensure that the Foster Care Unit has funds on hand to use throughout the year to help our children who are suffering physically, mentally, and emotionally. A check can be made to FCC with "CO/DHR" in the memo line. Thank you for caring about the vulnerable children in our community.

HABITAT HOUSE #28 IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION

The walls have been assembled and are in the warehouse awaiting contractor completion of the slab. Photos of the slab construction site at 6304 Menifee in Northwest Huntsville are posted on the bulletin board outside the Parlor. A map to the house site is also posted on the bulletin board. A build schedule will also be posted when available. On site work is scheduled to start as soon as the slab is finished.

The Habitat orientation zoom presentation on Saturday was very well done and it is requested that all volunteers attend one of these monthly presentations before working on site.

Bob Senn, Mr. Habitat for FCC

HOW TO GIVE ON LINE?

Miss church, but would still like to give your tithe or offering? You may give online through PayPal by going to the church website <http://fcc-hsv.org/who-we-are/how-to-give/> and scrolling down to the donate button. You may designate your tithe or offering for the General Fund or specify a particular church ministry/fund. You may also designate if you would like this to be a recurring or single donation.

LOOKING FOR DIRECTIONS

Rev. Paul J. Allen IV

Sermon: May 22, 2022

Scripture Verses:

Acts 16: 9-15

Have you ever been in a situation where you did not know where to go or what to do or had a time in your life where you simply felt lost? We have all had these feelings from time to time, the sense that we are floundering without bearing, adrift, and alone. What we are all searching for is direction, a way to live and grow in the world. Unfortunately, sometimes we simply do not have a good sense of direction.

I use myself as an example. I can get lost in my bathroom let alone in a new city. It is why I constantly ask for directions, or now I use the Map apps on my phone, to find out where I am going. Early in my ministry in Farmville, NC a man came to me asking for a ride to the bus station in Greenville, NC, about 20 minutes away. He was lost and alone on the road and needed help so I decided to give him a ride. He may have been better served by walking to Greenville.

I did get directions to the bus station before I left, good directions as it turned out. But when I got downtown I simply could not find the station. We must have traveled miles out of our way searching and finally began to ask people on the street where to go. We got directions from a young man, an older woman, and even a biker on the road and they were all very nice and pointed the same way, but I still could not find the bus station.

Finally, I spotted a sign by the police station, turned on a street that we had been on no less than 20 times, and there it was. We had passed the station several times but a large evergreen bush was blocking the sign. It was then that I realized I could get the best directions possible and still get lost. I was so busy looking for a sign that I missed the destination.

As the scripture lesson for today begins we find the Apostle Paul amid crisis. Earlier, Paul and Barnabas, his companion on the first missionary journeys, had decided to go their separate ways,

Looking continued on page 5...

...Looking continued from page 4.
based on a disagreement over traveling companions. Barnabas wanted to take John Mark, who had left during the first missionary journey, but Paul felt that John Mark had deserted them amid difficult times. Instead, he chose Silas, a prophet, as a companion and later Timothy.

Evidently, this disagreement became so heated that no compromise could be found and the best thing to do was part company. Paul, Silas, and Timothy began to travel to the congregations that had been founded on the first missionary journey to support and nurture them, but when Paul decided to move into unfamiliar territory something went wrong.

We are told that Paul was forbidden by the Holy Spirit to evangelize in Asia, but was there more to Paul's reluctance to journey to new places? After all, he had lost the person who first had faith in him, the man who asked expressly for Paul to begin a momentous journey.

Perhaps Paul felt lost and alone without Barnabas and it seemed that his second missionary journey was beginning to flounder. This must have been agonizing to Paul, what was he supposed to do? Where was he to go? He had no plan and no direction?

Then, during the night, Paul had a dream. In it, he heard a man pleading with him and saying, "Come to Macedonia and help us!" Finally, Paul and his companions knew what they were meant to do Luke tells us that they left immediately convinced that God had called them to proclaim the good news to the Macedonians.

Paul and his companions had a new objective; they were secure that their course was set by God. As Paul and his followers continued their journey they traveled to Philippi, a Roman city in the district of Macedonia. On the Sabbath, Paul and his companions went outside the city gate to the river where Jewish followers would assemble because they did not have a synagogue.

Paul and his companions sat down together and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. It was unusual for men to speak

to women they did not know, but then we have already seen that convention does not mean a lot to Paul.

That is when Paul met Lydia. Lydia was called a worshiper of God. This probably meant that Lydia was not Jewish, but a Gentile who worshiped Israel's God. Luke also tells us that she was from Thyatira and was a dealer in purple cloth.

Traditionally, we have been told that this meant that Lydia was wealthy, but some scholars claim that Lydia's name and profession were found among freed slaves who dealt purple cloth in that region.

Rich or poor, Lydia heard Paul's message and her heart was opened by God. Luke makes it clear that this conversion was based on the power of God, not Paul's words or skill. Lydia's whole household was baptized and she urged Paul and his companions to stay at her home. Again this broke cultural taboos, a group of men could not stay in a woman's house lest certain questions be raised, but Paul's acceptance of her hospitality shows that the barriers that divided male and female and Jew and Gentile had been destroyed. Lydia is free to be hospitable and Paul can welcome her as a sister in Christ.

In time, Lydia's house became a center of Christian worship and outreach in Philippi, and Paul developed a close and loving bond with the congregation there. Later, when he writes his letter to the Philippians, he expresses his gratitude in this way, "You Philippians indeed know that in the early days of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you alone" (Philippians 4:15).

No church shared with him and supported him except the Philippians. They were the generous ones, the hospitable ones, the faithful ones. And it all started with Lydia, a woman who chose faith over fear.

Amid of personal crisis Paul heard the call of God through a vision and traveled to a land he did not know to proclaim the Good News. If Paul had

Looking continued on page 6...

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not answered would Lydia have heard the call and responded in such a way that not only made her a convert but a leader in the fledgling church?

In each case Paul and Lydia were searching for direction, but what made them different? Why did they listen and obey when so many others did not? Perhaps it was because they realized that receiving directions and getting to the destination were two different things.

The disagreement between Paul and Barnabas could have signaled the end of the young church. But instead of falling apart the church was strengthened because now there were two groups of missionaries instead of one.

Paul did not let the fear of failure get in his way, nor did he allow society's values to dictate with whom he could share his message. Lydia and Paul broke with custom and in doing so created new avenues for leadership. Both Paul and Lydia dared to respond to the call of God even in situations that were frightening, scandalous, and life-changing.

So, what is it that God has put you here to do? Where is God at work in your life right here and right now? What should you be doing as a disciple of Jesus Christ, put your faith into action?

If we follow the examples of Lydia and Paul, along with countless other people of faith, we will find ourselves moving from anxiety to serenity, and from a life ruled by fear to a life shaped by faith.

Our journey can be difficult and it might mean opening our homes, opening our wallets, or our calendars. Or it may mean opening our hearts and our lives to destinations we never thought we would arrive at. But God will provide direction, Christ will give us the strength to travel the road, and the Holy Spirit will erase our fear and let us walk boldly forward in faith, if we listen, respond, and open ourselves to God.

As Martin Luther once wrote, "I have held many things in my hands, and I have lost them all; but whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I still possess." Thanks be to God, Amen.

COVID-19 CHURCH PROTOCOLS (Approved by the Board on March 10, 2022)

- An in-person worship service is available at 9:30.** Virtual services (facebook.com/fcchsv, twitch.tv/fcchsv, or First Christian Church Huntsville on YouTube) are also offered 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 is optional**
- 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.
- The front section of the Sanctuary, on the pulpit side, is the least impacted area with the air flow of our heating and cooling system.**
- Offerings may be placed in the brass plate when exiting the sanctuary or sent by mail.
- 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 14 days
- Please notify the church office immediately if you develop symptoms after attending a service.**

CHURCH CALENDAR

- May 23 Paul on Sabbatical until August 22
10:30 am Quilters
- May 25 6 pm Men's Group
- May 30 **Memorial Day - Church Office Closed**
Quilters not meeting
- June 1 6 pm Men's Group
- June 5 **Pentecost Sunday**
Pentecost Offering
- June 6 10:30 am Quilters
- June 8 6 pm Men's Group
- June 9 6 pm Board Meeting
- June 12 11:45 am Community Outreach