



# The Journey

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

## MOSTLY DEAD

by Molly Baskette

Some of our churches, as Revelation puts it, have a name of being alive, but they are dead. Or rather, in the words of Miracle Max from *The Princess Bride*: they are only “mostly dead. Mostly dead is slightly alive.”

Coronavirus – and the adaptive challenges it poses (How to virtual church and Sunday school? How to automate giving? How to work with a smaller staff?) – is make-or-break time for a lot of our communities. Here at month six of a pandemic, that could wear on for years, some of our churches may be looking to the future and not seeing one at all. They just can’t make the changes needed to survive. They don’t have the know-how, or the money, or the will.

Some of our churches are dying despite having done everything “right.” But some of our churches are dying because of imperfect works in the eyes of God: neglecting true hospitality, or holding on to racism and other heresies. Some are afraid of innovation, afraid to confront bullies and old conflicts, or afraid to be truly vulnerable and real with the people next to them in the pews.

God sometimes corners us so that we have to change – our institutions and ourselves. Along our slow path toward self-destruction, God takes us by the ankles and dangles us over the cliff upside down to remind us how desperately we actually want to live. God injects us with a weak virus to activate our immune system so that we will get our fight back.

Now is just such a moment for us, individually and collectively, as people of faith. We’re a full six months into this pandemic, and here is the final exam for this semester. There are only two questions:

Where are you feeling almost dead and where are you coming alive for the first time in years?

Prayer - God, wake me up, wake up my church, and strengthen in us what is on the point of death. We long to live.

Amen.

### FCC ONLINE

If you use Facebook, be sure to click Like and Follow (when you click on Follow, select See First) to keep up-to-date with church activities. [www.facebook.com/fcchsv/](http://www.facebook.com/fcchsv/)

You may view previous sermons and other church videos on Youtube at [www.youtube.com/channel/UCzQCRY8Vfa-IDhuqUnUhCKw](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzQCRY8Vfa-IDhuqUnUhCKw) (if you have a Youtube account, click on Subscibe and the Bell icon to get notifications when a new video is posted) or on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/pg/fcchsv/videos/](http://www.facebook.com/pg/fcchsv/videos/) (see Facebook Like and Follow directions above.)

Deadline for the *Journey* is **Thursday, September 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.**

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH AUGUST

Thanks for your donations to Morris P-8 school. We delivered multiple masks, hand sanitizers, water bottles, boxes of facial tissue, disinfectant, and wipes and sent a check for \$315. These items will keep the students and staff safe and healthy this year!



## WEEKLY PRAYER CONCERNS



Not Published Online

Christian Women's Ministries service project for September is Hope Place. Hope Place is an agency of Crisis Services of North Alabama that provides emergency shelter, counseling, court advocacy, etc. for victims of domestic violence and their children. Please join our Circle members in supporting this worthy cause during September. You may include your donation with your church offering by noting "Hope Place" and the amount.

Thank you, Nancy Woodall

### JOIN US FOR THE 9:00 AM SUNDAY DRIVE-IN/TAILGATE WORSHIP SERVICE

You are invited to come in your vehicle as a family unit and you can stay in your car or you can bring chairs to sit in your parking space. **The service is broadcast on FM 107.9** (limited to the parking lot area) so you may tune into the service on the radio in your vehicle. There is also a public address system for those sitting outside their vehicles. We ask that you maintain social distancing and that if you leave your car you will wear a mask. **Please bring your own communion elements.** They will be blessed and we will partake together.

Drive in service attendance:  
September 6 - 66 (+ 1 dog)



**THIS WEEK'S FOOD BASKET** is in honor of Ann Thompson by Pat Blackman.

### REGIONAL PRAYER REQUEST

Azalea Hills Christian Church, Mobile, 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](mailto: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**

#### Sunday, September 13

**Scripture** Matthew 18: 21-35  
**Sermon** "Walking on Dry Land"

#### Sunday, September 20

**Scripture** Matthew 20: 1-16  
**Sermon** "When Bread is Not Enough"

#### Sunday, September 27

Children's Sabbath  
Youth & Children's Sunday



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

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Who Is This Even For?

By Quinn G. Caldwell

If you try my heart, if you visit me by night, if you test me, you will find no wickedness in me; my mouth does not transgress. - Psalm 17:3 (NRSV)

Who is this psalm even for? Who could pray it with a straight face?

A mostly clean conscience, fine. But blameless? Free not only of personal sin but participation in any sort of collective or social sin, too?

Is there anyone who seriously believes this about themselves? If there is, are we sure we should be encouraging them?

The psalms are words from humans to God, not the other way around. All the modes of human emotion and expression, worthy or not, are given voice. Maybe that's how these lines made it in there?

Still, this sort of blamelessness is so obviously an impossibility that one suspects the psalmist must have been writing ironically. Or maybe in the easy-to-lampoon character of the church member who's forever claiming they don't need prayers of confession in the worship service.

On the other hand, while I'd never claim out loud to be free of wickedness, I sure have found myself acting that way from time to time. Looking like butter wouldn't melt in my mouth, with a log in my eye all the while. Maybe the psalmist wrote those words for us to say - not so that we would believe them, and not to make fun of those who do - but so that in saying them, we'll find them sticking in our mouths, find ourselves choking on their untruth. So that maybe then we'll turn to some other psalm, one of the ones that say, "Help me," "Save me," "I need you," "Forgive me."

Prayer - OK, OK, I get it. It was written for me. Thank you. Amen.