



The Journey

Volume XXIX No. 42
October 18, 2021
www.fcc-hsv.org

FILLED WITH GRATITUDE

While we have a difficult time talking about money in our society, Jesus talks about this topic often in the gospels. One in seven verses in the Gospel of Luke is about money and eleven out of thirty-nine parables speak to how money is used. Jesus believed that we should not be preoccupied with wealth, instead, it was useful as a tool, and if we were blessed with wealth God wanted us to share our resources.

On October 17th we began our Fall Stewardship Campaign which will end on November 14th, Stewardship Sunday. During our worship services, you will hear leaders in our congregation speak about why they give their time and talents to the church. Rev. Laura and I will be speaking about Stewardship during our sermons and the tithes and gifts we receive will help us to compile our budget for 2022.

Budgeting and financial planning is a transparent process here at First Christian Church. Each Committee requests an amount in the budget for the year, and based on expenses, pledges, and estimated giving, the final budget is proposed to the board and then the congregation for approval. The congregation makes the final decision as to how our financial resources are spent by approving the budget. The pledges we receive allow the church to plan for operating costs, programming, and ministry in a way that allows us to get the most benefit from each pledge. Every Stewardship commitment helps to support the mission of First Christian Church to connect to God and each other. This is especially important this year as we are returning to a more normal structure after the Covid-19 pandemic. In order for the church to properly use the resources that are so generously provided we need to know what we can expect.

So what are some ways you can give?

- Fill out a Stewardship giving card and offer your tithe or gift weekly or monthly during the worship services.
- Use Automatic Bill Pay through your bank, your gift can be sent automatically to the church.
- Give by mail - Payable to First Christian Church and mail to: First Christian Church 3209 Whitesburg Drive, Huntsville, AL 35802
- Give online through PayPal, you can find a handy button on our website.

We just also understand that stewardship is not just about money, it is the basic idea that we should be good stewards of all the gifts God has provided. This means that our money, time, energy, physical and spiritual gifts are to be used for the glory of the Creator who provided these blessings. Volunteering for a Committee, helping in the church office or with one of our special events, working on church clean-up days, and with our Mission events, is vital to the health and ministry of our congregation. When we think about all that God has given us we are filled with a sense of awe and thanksgiving and this sense of gratitude should lead us to service. Thanks be to God for the blessings we have received and the call to use them, Amen.

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://www.facebook.com/fcchsv), [twitch.tv/fcchsv](https://www.twitch.tv/fcchsv), or [youtube.com/channel/UCzQCRY8Vfa-IDhuqUnUhCKw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzQCRY8Vfa-IDhuqUnUhCKw)

Deadline for the *Journey* is **Thursday, October 21**, at Noon. Email to: publisher@fcc-hsv.org

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

TRUNK OR TREAT - "DRIVE-THROUGH PARADE" & IT'S THE GREAT PUMPKIN, CHARLIE BROWN SUNDAY, OCTOBER 24

**TRUNK-OR-TREAT
DRIVE THRU**

On Sunday night, October 24, from 5:00-6:00 pm we are having our annual Trunk or Treat. This year Trunk or Treat will be a Drive-Through Parade. We will be using the parking lot facing the Sanctuary and will have trunks decorated with church members in costumes. People attending the event would remain in their vehicles and drive through with us standing by our trunks waving. At the end of the parade Pastor Laura will be handing out bags pre-packed with candy, treats, and prizes to the children in their vehicles.



We will also be showing the cartoon, It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown on the big screen on Grandma Sue's Playground. We will have two showtimes for this: 5:30 & 6:15 p.m. Please bring a blanket or chair and social distant. Snacks will be provided!

We still need people to volunteer to provide their vehicle for a trunk. We also need people to donate bags of candy and/or donate monetarily. Please contact Pastor Laura if you would like to volunteer at laura@fcc-hsv.org or 256-881-0150.

CHURCH CALENDAR

- Oct. 18 10:30 am Quilters
- Oct. 20 6 pm Men's Group
7 pm Choir Rehearsal
- Oct. 21 10 am Women's Bible Study
- Oct. 24 5 - 6 pm Trunk or Treat
5:30 & 6:15 pm Movie:
*It's the Great Pumpkin
Charlie Brown*
- Oct. 25 10:30 am Quilters
- Oct. 27 6 pm Men's Group
7 pm Choir Rehearsal
- Oct. 28 10 am Women's Bible Study



**SHORT TERM
PRAYER CONCERNS**



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

Grace Christian Church
Helena, AL

GIVING STATEMENTS AVAILABLE

Third Quarter Giving Statements are available in the Narthex on Sunday and in the Church Office during the week. If you are not comfortable coming to the church in-person, call or email the office (256-881-0150 or office@fcc-hsv.org) and we will email you a copy of your statement. Questions? Call 256-881-0150.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH IN OCTOBER

Our sister Disciples of Christ church in Huntsville, Grateful Life Community Church, provides ministry, food, clothing, tent housing, blankets, reading glasses, bikes, over-the-counter medicines, and toiletries to those within our community who have little in the way of material goods. Also, at this time, Grateful Life's van needs repair. In October, please give generously your monetary donations that may be used for these purposes. Make your check to FCC with 'Grateful Life' in the memo line.

Thank you,
Carrie German Love

SUPPORT THE CWM OCTOBER PROJECT

The Christian Women's Ministry's community project for October is support for the Neaves-Davis Center for Children. The Neaves-Davis Center houses juvenile court intake and probation services, detention services, community service programs, and the community placement and supervision program. Additional programs for detained juveniles include food services, medical services, recreational services, and library services. Religious services and activities are also provided, partially funded through community religious groups and civic organizations.

Please join CWM in supporting this worthy service. You may include your donation with your church offering by noting "Neaves-Davis Center" and the amount.

Thank you,
Janet Sholes

SENIOR ADULT RETREAT

November 4 - 5, 2021

The Senior Adult Cabinet is planning for its annual Senior Adult Retreat on November 4-5, 2021, at Rolling Hills Retreat Center in Calera, Alabama. The theme of the retreat is "**Celebrate Life!**" and the keynoters will be **Rev. Dale and Mrs. Mercedes Braxton**. All who consider themselves to be senior adults in the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region are encouraged to be a part of this retreat.

The Rolling Hills Retreat Center offers a lodge with motel-type rooms (with sheets, towels, pillows) and an adjacent meeting space where all meals will be served. The retreat begins just prior to lunch on Thursday, November 4, and will conclude by 1:30 p.m. on Friday, November 5. You may download a flyer and registration form [HERE](#) and you may also register on-line [HERE](#).

SHARING THE JOY

Mission Family 3 invites you to join us in a unique celebration of the engagement of Stan Ball and Audrey Eckart. Many of you will recall watching Stan grow while being in our midst with his Mom and Dad, Karen and Matt. Please take time to learn more of Stan and Audrey's story on the website below. Even though we will not have the opportunity to celebrate in person, as a church family we are sending love and congratulations to the couple with anticipation of their wedding October 29, 2021. Checkout their website below as "Their story" is very special.

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE SUNDAY, OCTOBER 17

Service: 79

Small Groups: 17



THIS WEEK'S FOOD BASKET is in memory of Nancy Stayman by Don & Norma Muncy

MOMENT FOR STEWARDSHIP

Offered by the Disciples Center for

Faith and Giving (*inspired by Mark 10:45*)

So often in the Gospels, the disciples end up bickering with each other. Sometimes, it seems these twelve followers are like brothers who've spent too much time cooped up in the same room!

In Mark's Gospel ten disciples gang up on James and John, pretty angry that these two "thunder clouds" are trying to grab places of honor on either side of Jesus when he's sitting in his glory. Jesus steps in like a teacher with a room full of squabbling teens, and sets a larger context for his words.

"The Son of Man came...to serve, and give his life a ransom for many."

What did Jesus give? Jesus gave his life as a ransom (that is, as payment or compensation). Jesus paid the price to release "many".

Today, I invite you to consider what this means to you;

Jesus, centuries ago, set you and me free from all that keeps us prisoners.

Jesus, centuries ago, invited disciples to follow him as servants.

What will you give, today, as you consider how you live your servant life, becoming great as a disciple of Jesus?

Consider what you offer as a symbol of the identity you have as a ransomed follower of Jesus Christ!

Amen.

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ARE WE ABLE?

Rev. Paul J. Allen IV Sermon October 17, 2021

Scripture Verses: Mark 10: 35-45

A Minister once quipped that Jesus must have known he was in trouble when James and John came to him and said, "We want you to do whatever we ask you." This is what is called a no-win situation. It is the same as when someone asks you, "What do you really think?" or "Do you want the truth?"

Jesus replied, "What do you want me to do for you?", the same response I make when the kids act particularly nice and start doing chores around the house without us asking. James and John told Jesus they wanted him to grant them the honor of sitting at his left and right hand when he came to glory.

This is royal imagery. The seats at the left and right hands of the King were reserved for his heirs, the second and third most powerful people in the Kingdom. And the person who sat at the right hand was usually seen as favored. I often wonder if Jesus said yes, if the next question James and John would have asked was, "OK, who gets to sit at your right hand?"

Jesus understood how absurd this question was. The scripture passage just before this story is the third time that Jesus told the disciples of his coming death and resurrection. By now, he must have despaired that the disciples would ever listen to him because they were obviously not getting the point.

They had their own idea of what was going to happen when Jesus entered Jerusalem. They thought that the people would rise up behind the promised Messiah, revolt against the Romans, and create a new Kingdom, in which Jesus would be the ruler. James and John were just trying to make sure that they would receive their share of the power and glory.

Before we dismiss this idea out of hand we have to realize that this was exactly what the Jewish people thought a Messiah was supposed to do. What the disciples did not realize was that

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...**Able** continued from page 4
Jesus' power would come from a different source. Instead of conquest, Jesus would show the world the power of sacrifice.

William Willimon writes about a fellow campus minister who asked him to participate in the baptism of a graduate student. The grad student was from China and had been attracted to the Christian faith while a student at Duke. Willimon writes that he joyfully participated in the baptism of the student and thought it was a bright idea to bring a camera and take a few pictures after the baptism.

"You can send these pictures to your family back in China," he said. "You can share your baptism day with your friends at home." He noticed that the group looked a little shy and awkward, but they stood together and posed for the pictures.

After the baptism the campus minister said to him, "Oh, that was embarrassing, you with your camera and all."

"Embarrassing? Why?" He asked.

"Well, because now that he's baptized, his life has been ruined. His parents say that they will disinherit him. The government will probably take away his scholarship. He can't show those pictures to anybody back home. His life as he knew it is over because he's been baptized into Jesus."

Willimon wrote that is when it hit him, "Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with my baptism?" Jesus told James and John? They did not know what they were asking. They did not understand the depth of the commitment that they were volunteering for. The two men confidently answered, "We are able!" not knowing what their answer meant.

I wonder if Jesus wanted to laugh or cry at this point. "Alright," he says, "You will get your wish, but I cannot grant you the seats at my left and right hand, they are not mine to give.

When the other disciples heard this discussion they became angry, not because James and John didn't get the message, but because they wanted to be a part of this power structure. They also wanted to sit at the left and right hand of Jesus.

The argument increased until Jesus had to talk to them.

"We are not to be ruled like the governments of the world." Jesus told them. "Rather I tell that if you want to be great you must become a servant and whoever wishes to be first must become a slave to all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Again Jesus tried to prepare the disciples for his death and for the sacrifices they would be called to make, but they simply did not understand. They were probably envisioning the servants that would care for them and the riches they would gain. The need for power overwhelmed the disciples. They were looking forward to being the trusted advisors to a warrior king, power players in a new Israel, the rich and famous in their society.

It is very easy to fall into the trap of thinking that we are not like the Disciples. We have the gift of hindsight, we know the end of Jesus' story, and we understand the glory of the resurrection.

But if we are honest with ourselves, we know we also desire power and control in our own lives and in the world. We fall into the sins of pride and the lust for power. It is only human to want to be comfortable and secure no matter what it costs others. So when we hear Jesus tell us about servant leadership the concept is so alien that we assume that it is just a metaphor, a cute saying of Jesus.

We do not follow Christ's example of sacrifice and servitude because it does fit with our understanding of reality, but sometimes being a Christian means accepting what does make sense to the world. It means doing what we are not prepared to do, losing our understanding of human authority, and gaining strength from a different source.

James and John did not know what they were asking. They did not know what they agreed to when they so casually replied, "We are able." The lives of the disciples changed radically when they discovered what the message of Jesus

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...**Able** continued from page 5 actually meant. Their existence became one of servant leadership as they created a new church and gave their lives for their fellow Christians.

In Christian traditional stories James became the first Christian martyr, beheaded in Jerusalem not long after Pentecost. John lived a long life but was exiled to Patmos by the Romans, so he could not preach or teach. In their own way James and John suffered for the faith, they drank from the cup of Christ; they received the same baptism and gave their lives for God.

Like James and John, we don't fully realize what we are getting into when we accept the call of Christ. We may think that our answers are quite different from the disciples, but they are not. All too often we casually answer, "We are able." when in truth we are anything but. The cost of discipleship is high.

We are called to turn away from our dreams of power and turn to God. Called to a life of servant leadership, putting the needs of others before our own. Called to follow the example of Christ, by sacrificing our pride and humbly serving God. Called to share the gifts that God has provided for us so the church may thrive and others may hear and know the Good News of Christ. These are the decisions we must make if we want to sit beside Jesus.

Yet, we also know that Christ is always with us and wants us to understand. The sacrifice of Jesus, for our sake, was so we can be a part of the Kingdom of God here and now. The gifts that we are given provide the strength and the resources we need to become a part of his ministry. Are we able to drink from the same cup as Christ? Are we able to be baptized as he was baptized? By our own power no, but through the power of God, we not only succeed, but we also allow others to succeed as well. Thanks be to God, Amen.

COVID-19 CHURCH PROTOCOLS

(Approved by the Board on August 12.)

- **One 9:30 a.m. service** will be offered at least through May 2022. First Christian Church offers virtual services (facebook.com/fcchsv, 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.
- Food, coffee, and other hospitality services remain suspended until further notice.
- **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

