



GROWING IN SPIRIT

So often Stewardship Campaigns focus on the need for the church to pay its bills or keep the lights on. However, Churches that approach financial stewardship from a biblical perspective do not view the money Christians give to their congregation merely as a way to meet these physical concerns. Rather, these congregations see financial contributions as a way to help people grow spiritually in their relationship with God by supporting their church's mission and ministry with their gifts.

Our congregation's Stewardship Campaign has selected the emphasis of "Time, Talent, and Treasure" to encourage the biblical and spiritual principles of generous giving. November 14th is our Stewardship Celebration Sunday, where we will share the biblical philosophy that members should give for their spiritual development, rather than on the need of the church to receive. Instead of treating people like members of a social club who pay dues, we treat our congregation like followers of Jesus Christ, who wants us to give unselfishly as an act of discipleship. This celebration encourages people toward proportionate giving in response to the question, "What is God asking me to share?"

During the worship service on Stewardship Celebration Sunday, we are asking our attendees and members to make their financial commitments to our church's mission, fellowship, education, and other ministries in this community and around the world. We will provide Estimate of Giving Cards that will assist our Finance Committee and the Church Board to make an informed decision about the finances and the budget for 2022. During worship, we will conduct a brief period of instruction and inspiration, peaked by members sharing their commitments and closing with a time of celebration and prayer.

The past two years have been a time of transformation for the Church as a whole and for our congregation. As the COVID-19 pandemic begins to subside we must be ready to meet the needs of our changing world, to offer hope and peace in the midst of uncertainty, a place of welcome to those who are searching, and to share the love of Christ with all people. In order to accomplish our mission we need to generously give back a portion of those blessings that God has provided for us, not only for the growth of the church but for our own spiritual growth as well. This could be a time of wondrous development for the Church if we accept the challenge of faith and give of our time, talents and treasure. Please join me in praying for the success of our Stewardship Campaign and I look forward to seeing you on Sunday.

Grace and Peace, Rev. Paul Allen

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.

Deadline for the *Journey* is **Thursday, November 11**, at Noon. Email to: publisher@fcc-hsv.org

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

DEAR CONGREGATION,

I am excited to tell you that we will be participating in the Christmas Charities Christmas stockings! We have 100 stockings to be filled for ages 2-10. They are located in the Narthex and need to be returned to the church by November 28. There is a list of suggested items inside each stocking. If you are unable or uncomfortable shopping for the stockings, you can send a check to the church with the amount you want to spend made out to FCC with Christmas Charities on the memo line.. We have several groups who have volunteered to shop for you. If you have questions call Cindy Burger at -----



**SHORT TERM
PRAYER CONCERNS**



Not Published Online

CHURCH CALENDAR

- Nov. 8 9:30 am Esther Circle
10:30 am Quilters
- Nov. 9 6 pm Elders' Meeting
- Nov. 10 6 pm Men's Group
- Nov. 11 **Veterans Day - Office Closed**
- Nov. 14 9:30 am **Celebration Sunday**
11:30 am Community Outreach
1:00 pm Brandon & Sharifa Love
Rutledge baby shower
- Nov. 15 4:30 pm Christian Ed. Meeting
- Nov. 21 **Thanksgiving Sunday**
- Nov. 28 9:30 am **Hanging of the Greens**
- Nov. 29 5:30 pm ECM Board Meeting
- Dec. 1 11:30 am Phoebe Circle
6 pm Men's Group
7 pm Choir Rehearsal
- Dec. 6 10:30 am Quilters
- Dec. 11 10:00 am til noon Christmas Fest
- Dec. 12 9:30 am Lessons & Carols
10:30 am **Congregational Meeting**

CONDOLENCES to the families on the recent deaths of: Alice Young, member from 1966 - 2007; Alex & Allison Conaway, friends of Sharifa Love-Rutledge; and Carey Link, friend of Margaret J. Vann.

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, Vallehermoso Springs, AL

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7
Service: 73
Small Groups: 52

THIS WEEK'S FOOD BASKET is in memory of Sheryl Stiles by Tom & An-nelle Craig..



STEWARDSHIP CELEBRATION SUNDAY!

Over the past several weeks we have been talking about giving, focusing on the 3 T's: Time, Talent and Treasure. A Stewardship Moment has followed each of Pastor Paul's sermons during this time, where you heard testimonials from members of the congregation. Each Stewardship Moment focused on a different aspect of giving.

This Sunday, November 14, is Celebration Sunday that will end this year's Stewardship Campaign. Traditionally we come forward and place our Pledge Cards in a basket. Blank cards will be available, if you have already returned your card, so that you may still participate. Please prayerfully consider a 10% increase in your pledge to support our 2022 budget. It is very important that you return, or update, your Pledge Card so we can more accurately plan our budget. (You may also email matt@fcc-hsv.org with your pledge if you cannot attend.)

The following is a breakdown on the 65 Stewardship Pledge Cards received for the 2021 budget.

9	\$10,000 or over
14	\$5,000 - \$5,999
9	\$4,000 - \$4,999
11	\$3,000 - \$3,999
6	\$2,000 - \$2,999
12	\$1,000 - \$1,999
4	\$1 - \$999

Pledge cards are available at the welcome table in the Narthex on Sundays and in the church office throughout the week.

If you have any questions, please see Bob Senn, Kyle Love or Carrie German Love, who are serving as your co-chairs for the stewardship committee this year.

HEADS UP!

There will be a very important Congregational Meeting concerning the 2022 Budget on December 12. It will take place after the Lessons and Carols 9:30 am Worship Service. Please plan to attend.

HARRIS HOME FOR CHILDREN

NEEDS OUR HELP

The Community Outreach Committee for its November project is requesting financial donations for Harris Home for Children. This safe haven for neglected or abused children began in 1954 when Chessie Harris took a few neglected children into her small home. Through her determination to care for more children, Harris Home has grown into a larger campus to serve many more children who cannot remain with their parents. It is also the only emergency crisis service for children in the State of Alabama. Obviously, Harris Home is always in need of financial help to cover the expense of caring for the children. We can help by writing a check to FCC with Harris Home in the

AL and NWFL Christian Women's Ministries Regional Project

CWM's service project for November is Well-House. Our monetary support helps to further the mission of the Well-House, which seeks to honor God by rescuing and providing opportunities for restoration to female victims of human trafficking.



Human trafficking is a \$10 billion industry in the U.S. alone. It is the fastest growing criminal activity, second only to drug trafficking. Forty percent of human trafficking happens here in the Southeast.

The average age of entry is 12-14 years old. Eighty percent of victims are females and up to 50% are minors. There are over 2 million active runaways and all at risk of being recruited into prostitution within 48 hours of running away.

For more information check out the WellHouse website at: WWW.THE-WELLHOUSE.ORG

You can make a donation by writing your check to the church, noting "WellHouse" in the memo line. Your donation to this worthy cause is tax deductible.

Thank you for your consideration of this worthy cause,
Ruth Lackey, CWM November Service Coordinator

A LITTLE EXTRA

by Ann Kansfield

John told them, "If you have two coats, give one away to someone who doesn't have any."

Luke 3:11 (CEV)

This scripture sure seems to be about material goods—a call to live simply and generously by giving away excess “stuff” to people in need. It reminds me of the UCC Book of Worship communion prayer that describes “the vision of the day when sharing by all means scarcity for none.”

Sometimes as we pray these words before the eucharist, I think of Luke 3:11 and say, “I should go through my closet and give away my extra coats.”

Over time, I’ve experienced this prayer as a call to mutual ministry with others—something much deeper than giving away extra things. Depending on the day or the thing that’s being shared, I may have extra or I could be in need. Some days we have extra love, compassion, space for prayer and deep faith. Other days, we might need a little extra love or compassion, prayer or faith.

Recently my children and I went out for dinner. It was a long day, and they were on my last nerve. Just as I was losing patience with them, our server arrived to take our order. The kids continued to act up, and she remained calm. She turned to take my dinner order and said, “What can I get you?” I said, “I need your patience.” She smiled long enough for me to catch my breath. She had extra serenity and without thinking about it shared that with me.

Prayer

God, help me to be generous both with giving and with receiving the things that I and others might need today. 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)

MISSION FAMILY 4 is pleased to invite you to an

all-church Baby Shower for Brandon and Sharifa Love-Rutledge on Sunday, November 14, at 1:00 p.m. in the Commons area of the church.



(Please enter through the Sanctuary doors.) *For the protection of the expectant mom, attendees are asked to wear masks. Fun and games will be had by all.* The couple is registered at Target and babylist.com (Rutledge).

Questions? Contact Roberta Shivers at - - - - -



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EVERYTHING WE HAVE

Rev. Paul J. Allen IV

Sermon Nov. 7, 2021

Scripture Verses:

Mark 12: 38-44

I always find it interesting that when we buy something everyone wants to know how much we paid for. You can usually tell if you got a better deal if they don't say, "well we only paid such and such for ours." We are impressed by a good value but we are even more impressed by wealth.

It is human nature to gravitate to people who are dressed better, look better, and seem more educated. They are the people we want to know because we hope that their success will rub off on us and that other people will associate us with the cultural elite. The people we want to emulate often lead extravagant lifestyles, traveling to exotic places, driving the latest automobiles, and spending money as if they never had to worry where it came from.

Oh yes, wealth impresses human beings, but what impresses God?

In the scripture lesson for today Jesus had traveled with his disciples to the temple, the seat of religious and political power in Israel. We already know that the religious leaders were planning to arrest Jesus, so when he entered the temple grounds they began to question him, trying to get Jesus to say the wrong thing, to make a mistake.

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...**Everything** continued

Jesus evaded these attempts, but at the same time his teachings took on a sharp edge directed at these temple leaders. He told the crowd to beware of the scribes and their false promises. They like to make a show of themselves in their long robes, be treated with great respect, and provided with the best of accommodations. Being a leader has its privileges, but true followers of God keep the good of the people foremost in their minds.

Jesus told the crowd, as the Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees listened, that their leaders were abusing their power. They were devouring widow's houses, now widows were the cultural symbol of poverty and powerlessness in Jesus' time and only worshiped for the sake of appearance.

Jesus shattered the illusion of the temple priests when he shed light on their hypocrisy. They told their followers how to live and serve God based on the Jewish law but did not follow the law themselves. They used it harshly to defend their practices and humble their detractors. God was not impressed!

After these harsh words Jesus sat across from the temple treasury and watched the people. The treasury boxes were not used to collect a Jewish person's regular tithe; they were an opportunity for giving, an extra endowment for the upkeep and expansion of the temple, and a way to contribute to the widows and orphans, those who not care for themselves, in society.

These offering boxes were connected by a long set of metal tubes. So when a wealthy person put in their offering the coins would tumble down the tubes making a great deal of noise. The more you gave, the more noise they made and the more attention you received.

As Jesus watched, many wealthy people put in large sums intended to impress those around them. Then, unnoticed by anyone but Jesus, a widow walked to the treasury and gave two copper coins, or mites, the smallest denomination of money at that time. Jesus called the disciples to him and told them that this widow had put more in the treasury than all of the wealthy people combined.

Can you imagine the look on the disciple's faces? This was clearly not the case, however, Jesus continued, "the rich gave out of their abundance, but the widow gave everything she had, all she had to live on." God was impressed!

A recent article by the Barna Research Group, a Christian Marketing Research Firm, on giving in the United States suggests that people are more comfortable giving to charities than churches. Why is that? The Barna group suggests that many churches have failed to provide a compelling vision for how the money given will make a difference in the world, so donors find other groups that can and will use the resources provided.

There was a recent NPR story about a wealthy individual giving money to a small college if they changed their name to the name of the donor and the backlash it received. The person wanted to be recognized for their gift and this is something that we are used to in our culture. It is clear that Christians want to know where their money is going. We want to get full value for our donations.

However, the widow saw things differently, she saw her offering as an act of worship. She had nothing to give that others would consider valuable, but she gave what little she had to God. I wonder what changes the church experience if we began to see giving as an act of worship rather than an obligation?

Now don't get me wrong, we should know where our money goes, but perhaps we need to stop thinking of it as our money, isn't our wealth a gift from God?

We also need to be careful about how we think of the widow. She is not an example of a person who chose poverty, a hermit who lived a secluded life; rather she chose to live a life of extreme generosity even though she was poor.

The widow was the very person for whom the money in the temple treasury was being collected, yet she chose the extravagance of giving and trusted that God would meet her needs. In doing so she challenges every one of us to ask, what have we given to the church, to each other, and God?

Now if you are like me, this story is rather uncomfortable to deal with. I find myself wanting to soften the message even now because it disturbs my comfortable world, and it makes me look at my bank balance. I know that my entertainment expenses for a month could be better spent. I try to give and conserve, but I know that I am not perfect.

So what is the answer? How can we reorder our lives based on the things that impress God and not people? Perhaps, it is looking seriously at what we

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...**Everything** continued

keep instead of what we give. What is more important, our lifestyles or God? Are there changes we need to make to fulfill our call to faith?

I know people are sitting here today who give all they can to the church, but I also know that many can offer more. Perhaps this gift is not money, maybe it is time, commitment, new ideas, or vision, but we are all called to give extravagantly to God as an act of worship because God gives extravagantly to us, through the life, death, resurrection, and continued presence of Jesus Christ.

Right now the Church, and our congregation, are at a crossroads. When the COVID crisis began many were very generous to keep the mission of the church going in uncertain times. Now, as things return to normal, that crisis seems to be averted, however, the world has changed. Our area is in the midst of unprecedented growth, new families are coming here to make a new life, and just like everyone else they are searching for meaning and for a place to find God's love.

How will we reach out to these new visitors, how can we reach out to our community if we do not have resources to draw from. Now more than ever we need to provide financial support, volunteer, share our gifts and share our experiences with others so that the church can meet these new challenges with open hearts and strong faith. We need to share Christ's love with the world because it desperately needs it. We need to invite others to our congregation because we know it changes lives. We need to support our church to be a part of the work of God on earth.

The story of the widow's offering should leave us uncomfortable for when we are confronted by her gift, and the knowledge of Jesus' sacrifice, we realize how unworthy we are. Yet the message also tells us that God loves us still and continues to give us opportunities to share the grace and gifts we have been given.

Whatever your beliefs I hope you will use this week as an opportunity to explore how you can reorder your life based on the things that impress God and not the people around you? Use Jesus, the widow, and other Christian leaders as your examples, pray for guidance, and listen to God's response.

Today the widow teaches us that we all have something to give, everything we have because God has given everything to us. This belief is all we have to live on and it is more than enough. Amen.

COVID-19 CHURCH PROTOCOLS

(Approved by the Board on October 14.)

- **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.
- Coffee (only) service will resume on December 5
- **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

