



The Journey

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November 20, 2023
www.fcc-hsv.org

ADVENT IS COMING SOON

It is the week before Thanksgiving and at my house Patti has only one thing on her mind. Setting up the Christmas decorations. Patti loves Christmas, so much so that she is already listening to Christmas Carols in her car and when she works around the house. She cannot wait to decorate and was disappointed when I told her she could not put up the Christmas decorations right after Halloween. For Patti, Christmas is a time to relive childhood memories and the excitement she felt as the 25th came closer and closer.

I have a different view of Christmas. Since both of my parents were ministers Christmas has always been the busiest time of the year. As a child I can remember spending long hours at church because both of my parents engaged in meetings or events. Even now, it is hard to find time to enjoy the Advent season, much less Christmas with everything that has to happen. This does not mean that I am a scrooge, I just enjoy Christmas in a different manner. Instead of the lights, noise, and glitter that secular society seems to associate with this season I prefer the quiet, meditative side of Advent, the preparation of our hearts and souls for the celebration of the birth of Christ.

Whether we are ready or not Advent will be here December 3rd and First Christian Church will celebrate it its own way. The Hanging of the Greens service begins our celebration. Once again, our readers will remind us of the meaning of the symbols as the children and youth decorate our sanctuary for the advent season. This is a service that is unique to First Christian Church of Huntsville, and I am always grateful for the assistance of the Worship Committee, our music team, Alyssa, our parents, youth, and children that make the day possible. We hope to see you there.

Of course, there are many other offerings in the season, from the Funky Christmas Fashion Show on December 6 from 5:30 to 7:00 pm. We will have a holiday meal and afterward you can be a part of the festivities as you wear your best or worst Christmas attire. This is a fundraiser to help families in need have a wonderful Christmas and we will be voting on our favorite outfit with our donations (similar to how we vote on our favorite chili) where a dollar equals a vote.

We also have our Christmas Lessons and Carols service presented by the First Christian Church Choir on December 17 that features our choir, church musicians, and others who will help us worship God with music and joy. Do not forget our Christmas Eve services on December 24 at 9:30 am and 5:00 pm as we join with friends and family to celebrate the gift of Jesus Christ to us and for us.

There are other opportunities to celebrate, Christmas Fest, The ECM Christmas Sing, etc. It is my hope that there is something for everyone this year as we begin Advent and prepare our hearts and our lives for new life and a new year. May God bless you all in this season, Amen.

THE CHURCH OFFICE will be closed on Thursday & Friday, November 23 & 24, in observance of the Thanksgiving Holiday.

The *Journey* is published on the **first and third Monday** of the month.
The **deadline** for *Journey* submissions is **9:00 a.m. Thursday, November 30**. Email to: publisher@fcc-hsv.org

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FUNKY CHRISTMAS FASHION SHOW!

Hello all! Get ready for a brand-new fundraiser led by the youth group! Introducing the Funky Christmas Fashion show. This fundraiser doubles as a fun event for the entire church. **Following the 5:30 meal on Wednesday, December 7**, join the youth for a night of Christmas cheer and ugly Christmas sweaters to fund Christmas presents for 5 local children. The way the Funky Christmas Fashion show works is that members of the church, children's group, and youth group sign up to dress up in their ugliest, funkiest, most adorable, Christmas outfits and show them off to the congregation in the fashion show of the advent season. The fundraising part of this event happens directly following the runway show when all are invited to vote for their favorite contestant, one dollar is equal to one vote! At the end of this event, we will tally the votes and announce the winner!



Make sure to mark your calendars for **December 7th at 5:30 pm** in McMains! If you are interested in participating in the fashion show or would like to donate towards the shopping please contact Alyssa Burton at alyssa@fcc-hsv.org or **sign up** on the board located outside of the sanctuary!



IT'S A GIRL! Congratulations to Jordan & Kelsi Shrout Green, and big sisters Scarlett & Clara, on the birth of Hazel Michelle Green on November 1. Rick & Kay Shrout are the proud grandparents

THANK YOU!

A heart-felt thank you goes out to the congregation of First Christian Church for your strong support of the CWM October Project. Because of your generosity a check for \$691.00 will be sent to the Neaves-Davis Center for Children. Please be assured that your donations will be put to good use to benefit the youth of Huntsville and Madison County through the many programs and services provided by the Neaves-Davis Center.

YOUTH SHOPPING FOR OTHERS



In a few weeks, our youth will be Christmas shopping for several local families, selecting gifts and supplying basic needs. The upcoming Funky Christmas Fashion Show lets you vote with your dollars to help support these families.

But maybe you won't be available for that fun event, or maybe you want to give even more. Throughout November, you can note "Outreach - Youth Christmas" for any amount, whatever your preferred method of donating to Huntsville First Christian Church.

Your contributions determine how many families our youth can serve this Christmas.

Please give generously.

Karen Ball, Outreach Co-Chair

WELLHOUSE

November CWM/AL/NWFLRegional Project

This worthwhile center provides residential and therapeutic programs to female victims of human trafficking. This service was actually started by a survivor of human trafficking who saw the need for such a refuge. It is the largest single-site residential provider for victims in the US. 2020 data from a national hot line showed it to be pandemic-proof. They reported a 22% increase in online recruitment. 42% of victims were brought into human trafficking by a member of their family. In 2021 Wellhouse was able to finance and open a separate house on their campus just for children and teens.



Please take a few minutes to check out their website: www.the-wellhouse.org. While you are there click on "Shop" and see the various items made by trained survivors that are for sale.

You can make a donation by writing your check to the church, noting "WellHouse" in the memo line. You may also give through the church website at fcc-hsv.org/who-we-are/how-to-give/ and click on Donate.

Ruth Lackey, CWM November Service Coordinator

STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN 2024

Our church is very appreciative of your response to the 2024 Stewardship Campaign, with a special thanks to those who shared their thoughts on stewardship during Sunday morning services. Numbers are not complete yet, so you still have time to submit your estimate of giving card for next year. Please mail, turn in, or call in your estimate to the church office as soon as possible. Our cup truly runs over with blessings at First Christian Church.

Sue & Jeff Seward

Stewardship Campaign Co-chairs

THANK YOU FROM COMMUNITY OUTREACH

A big thanks goes out to First Christian! We collected \$510 for Grateful Life Church in October. Thanks so much for your generosity.

REGIONAL PRAYER REQUESTS

Fairfax Christian Church, Valley, AL
United Christian Church, Montgomery, AL

ATTENDANCE

Nov. 12: In-Person Worship Service: 87
Small Groups (During week & Sunday): 102
Nov. 19: In-Person Worship Service: 96
Small Groups (During week & Sunday): 104

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SUNDAY'S FOOD BASKETS are given in honor of Lisa Fitzgerald, Bible Study Leader, by Judy Crooks; and John & Jill Hall's anniversary.

Want to start a new spiritual discipline or continue a tradition? Why not keep a "blessing box" handy? You can celebrate blessings large or small on a regular basis by dropping a coin or more in as an intentional, "Thank You, God." You can use your own container or pick up a CWM blessing box (created in 1953) from your circle or from the narrow table in the Commons hallway. Contents will be collected in late March or April to support the Disciples Mission Fund.



December 2023

Birthdays

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 9 am Women’s Christmas Party
3 1st Sunday of Advent 9:30 am Hanging of the Greens 10:30 am Evangelism •Interactive Service 12:30 pm Youth Nashville Trip 2 pm Pickelball	4 10:30 am Quilters	5 10:30 am Fleming Farm Circle 11:30 Phoebe Circle	6 10:30 am ECM Worship 11:30 Phoebe Circle 5:30 pm Meal 6 pm Funky Christmas Fashion Show 7 pm Chancel Choir	7	8	9 11 am Christmas Fest
10 2nd Sunday of Advent •Christmas Special Offering •Commissioning of Alyssa Burton 10:30 am Rev. Alyssa Burton Reception 2 pm Pickelball	11 10:30 am Quilters 9:30 am Esther Circle 6 pm ECM Christmas Sing	12 4:30 pm Elders’ Meeting 6 pm ECM Christmas Sing	13 10:30 am ECM Worship 5:30 pm Meal 6 pm Men’s Bible Study •Kids Bible Study 7 pm Chancel Choir	14 9 am Journey Deadline 6 pm Board Meeting	15	16
17 3rd Sunday of Advent •Christmas Special Offering 9:30 am Lessons & Carols 2 pm Pickelball	18 No Quilters	19	20 5:30 pm Meal TBA 6 pm Groups TBA 7 pm Chancel Choir TBA	21	22 Church Office Closes at 12:30 pm	23
24 4th Sunday of Advent 9:30 am Worship Service 5 pm Christmas Eve Service	25 Church Office Closed	26	27 No Wednesday Night Activities	28 9 am Journey Deadline	29 Church Office Closes at 12:30 pm	30
31 9:30 am Worship Service	January 1 Church Office Closed					