



# The Journey

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## EXCITEMENT IS IN THE AIR

The week of Thanksgiving and the beginning of Advent has always been special for my family. Since there are so many ministers in my extended family getting together for Christmas was impossible, but we could take time off for Thanksgiving. We would gather at my Grandmother's home in Carthage, Illinois, have a huge meal, and then sit around the TV and watch football games. It is one of those traditions that continued even when my Grandmother passed away and the site shifted to my Aunt and Uncle's home in Michigan. This year we are meeting at my Cousin Scott's home in Indianapolis, which is a shorter drive for most of us. The location may change but the desire to come together does not, especially since we were not able to be together last year due to the pandemic. As I talk to my family over the phone you can sense the excitement, soon we will see each other once again.

The Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas seasons are a time of joy in the world, but as Christians, our celebration is deeper. Our joy is not based on the needs of our society or the materialism of our culture, instead, it is based on giving thanks to God for all we have been provided and preparing ourselves for the coming of Christ, once again, into the world. The gifts of family and friends, food and shelter, and the glory of Jesus Christ, not reflected in his birthplace; but in the sky, as the angels sang of his coming, in the message of the Shepherds, and in Mary as she treasured their words and pondered them in her heart.

The most important aspect of this season is not the preparation of our homes but the preparation of our lives for Christ. Together we celebrate the certainty of God's promises, that the Emmanuel, the God with us, came to earth to experience humanity, and doing so provided forgiveness and salvation for all. We also know that Christ is still with us and that he will come again and so we are called to continually prepare the way of the Lord.

I hope that every one of you will enjoy Thanksgiving, the season of Advent, and have a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. Give thanks with family and friends and remember that you are never alone for Christ is with you. Look upon one another with kindness and joy. Invite someone to your meal, sponsor a needy family for the holidays, give so that others might experience your joy, and remember that love was born on Christmas, a love that is nurtured in our hearts and shared by our words and actions. Thanks be to God, 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 **Wednesday, November 24**, 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.**

### CHRISTMAS CHARITIES CHRISTMAS STOCKINGS

Sunday, November 28, is the deadline for returning your filled stocking if you have not already done so. Thank you for your support in bring joy to 100 children ages 2 - 10 this year.



### SHORT TERM PRAYER CONCERNS



Not Published Online

#### JOIN THE COFFEE CREW

Looking for a way to serve the church? Join the Coffee Crew! It is not rocket science, but rocket scientists are welcome. Drop a coffee pouch in the machine and press brew, get some orange juice out of the Parlor kitchen refrigerator., and set up on the cart in the Commons area. Bingo! You've helped to facilitate fellowship at the church. (Kitchen orientation is provided.) Depending on the size of the crew, you serve about once every other month. Email publisher@fcc-hsv.org or call 256-881-0150 and say that you want to sign up for the Coffee Crew!

#### CHURCH CALENDAR

- Nov. 22 10:30 am Quilters
- Nov. 24 6 pm Men's Group
- Nov. 25 Thanksgiving Church Office
- Nov. 26 Thanksgiving Holiday Office Closed
- Nov. 28 9:30 am Hanging of the Greens
- Nov. 29 10:30 am Quilters  
5:30 pm ECM Board Meeting
- Dec. 1 11:30 am Phoebe Circle  
6 pm Men's Group  
7 pm Choir Rehearsal
- Dec. 2 6 pm Board Meeting
- Dec. 6 10:30 am Quilters
- Dec. 8 6 pm Men's Group  
7 pm Choir Rehearsal
- Dec. 11 10:00 am til noon Christmas Fest
- Dec. 12 9:30 am Lessons & Carols  
10:30 am Congregational Budget Meeting
- Dec. 13 10:30 am Quilters  
11 am Esther Circle  
5 pm Conveners' Meeting

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**  
Fairfax Christian Church, Valley, AL

**ATTENDANCE NOVEMBER 21**  
Worship Service: 66      Small Groups: 18

**THIS WEEK'S FOOD BASKET** is in honor of John & Jill Hall's anniversary.





**DECEMBER  
BIRTHDAYS**



**Not Published Online**

**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 memo line.

Thank you for caring about those in need in our community.

**IT'S A GIRL!** Congratulations to Thomas & Colleen (Cannon) Jenkins, and proud grandparents James & Beverly Cannon, on the birth of Spencer Parks Jenkins.



**AL AND NWFL CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S  
MINISTRIES REGIONAL PROJECT**

CWM's service project for November is WellHouse. Our monetary support helps to further the mission of the WellHouse, 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](http://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

**THANK YOU** for all the cards, food, telephone calls, and luncheons. They mean so much to Linda. It brightens her day and we are all so grateful for all of them but more importantly, we are grateful for the prayers! She lives her life through Christ and through him we know we will get through this!

So again, thank you, from Linda, William "Bud", Jeff, Bryan, Tim, and Jason Hooker

**SAVE THE DATE!**

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

## 2021 THANKSGIVING OFFERING

From the very beginning of the movement, Disciples have founded institutions of higher learning, encouraging students in their intellectual pursuits. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is still committed to higher education. The fifteen colleges and universities and the seven theological institutions in covenant with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) encourage students in their intellectual pursuits and nurture them as leaders to transform church, society, and world. The Thanksgiving offering supports everything from scholarships, to religious life offices, to faculty growth and development at our supported colleges and universities. The offering also provides scholarship and support for our theological education institutions. Each of our seminaries and divinity houses is committed to educating and forming Christian leaders for church and society. Generations of pastors, community leaders, and agents of social transformation have been educated at our theological institutions.

On **Sunday, November 28, we will collect the Thanksgiving special offering.** As we continue to struggle with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, our higher education institutions are facing unprecedented challenges and need our support now, more than ever. Even as they work diligently to ensure safe and healthy learning environments, the financial realities faced by many of our schools are adding additional stress to students, faculty, and staff.

This November, please give generously to this year's Thanksgiving offering. Your gifts make a world of difference as Disciples continue our legacy of supporting education and our institutions of higher learning. Note Thanksgiving Offering on the memo/note line or your check made out to FCC and place it in the collection plate on Sunday or mail it to the Church Office. You may also designate Thanksgiving Offering if you contribute through PayPal. (<http://fcc-hsv.org/who-we-are/how-to-give/>).

Thank you for your support.

## What Are We Looking For?

Rev. Paul J. Allen IV

Sermon Nov. 14, 2021

Scripture Verses:

John 6: 24-35

William Willimon, the former dean of the chapel at Duke University wrote about an experience he had at the Chapel. They had just heard one of the nation's great preachers. A 150-voice choir had sung two magnificent anthems, backed by a small orchestra. The chapel was packed and 1500 voices joined together in singing the great hymns of the faith, it was a magnificent day.

On the way out of the chapel Willimon heard two students talking. One turned to the other and said, "Frankly, that didn't do a thing for me." And he writes, "That's when that building imploded upon itself." All of the beauty and glory he had witnessed came crashing down. "After all, if what we had done here, 'didn't do a thing for me,' then why bother?"

He wanted to say to the young man, "Look kid, this is not about you! What is this about? God, that what's it's about. Our business here is theological rather than anthropological. It is not always about you."

This is a lesson most Christians need to learn about the church, it is not about us, it is about the community; it is about Jesus, it is about the Holy Spirit, it is about God. This can be a hard lesson to learn in a culture that teaches us to focus on ourselves, to look deeply at our own lives to find answers. When we hear that faith is not about us, it just isn't good news?

In the scripture lesson for today, we are told that the crowd, still present after the feeding of the five thousand, noticed that only one boat left their side of the Sea of Galilee. The disciples had taken the boat and Jesus had stayed behind, but when the crowd looked for Jesus they could not find him.

The crowd decided that he must have joined his disciples on the other side of the Sea so they traveled to Capernaum looking for him. When they found Jesus on the other side they asked how he got there. They had not seen him leave, and he was not on the boat, so was this another sign or a trick?

Jesus knew why they had really followed him. They had seen something miraculous and they wanted to see it again. It is like our desire to watch a beloved movie over and over or return to a restaurant and order our favorite dish. We want to have the

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...*Looking* continued from page 4 same experience, even if we know this is not possible.

The crowd wanted the bread that they had touched and eaten on the other side of the sea. It was something they could relate to and needed in their ordinary lives. Yet, the bread that Jesus gave to them was not meant to satisfy their physical hunger, it was a sign, a metaphor for the action of God.

Jesus told them not to focus on the material, or what perishes, but rather to strive for the food that endures which gives eternal life. He tells them they cannot find this food, it will be given to them by the Son of Man, whom God has ordained for this purpose. Their work will mean nothing if it does not lead them to the Messiah, they can't find eternal life on their own.

Of course the crowd has no clue as to what Jesus is talking about. They ask, "what must we do to perform the works of God?" and when Jesus answers, "believe in whom God has sent." they are still confused. They wanted miracles and signs that would identify the Son of Man. Like us, they wanted easy answers. If Jesus is the Messiah, shows of power were to be expected. They wanted to return to the model of their ancestors in the wilderness fleeing from Egypt who received manna from heaven when they were threatened with starvation. Would God still provide for the needs of God's people, and more importantly, would God meet their desires?

We are hungry and thirsty people. We hunger to be seen, to be known, to matter, and to have a purpose for our lives. We are thirsty for recognition and affirmation that what we do matters. We are starving for even 15 minutes of fame and will do anything to be remembered. St. Augustine says that our souls are restless until they find rest in God; we search for meaning not realizing that what we want is not always what we need.

Jesus told the people that the manna in the wilderness their ancestors received was not simply food. The real gift that God gave them was not bread, but the life and freedom that the bread represented. At that time the Israelites needed more than food, they needed hope, courage, and the strength to face the trials that surrounded them. When God provided bread it satisfied their physical and also their spiritual hunger. Their stomachs and hearts were full because they knew that God was with them.

In much the same way the people of Jesus' time did not need physical food, they needed the spiritual nourishment that only God can provide. The problem was that they were so focused on what they desired they forget to look for what they couldn't live without.

Jesus offered them the bread of life, literally belief in him that would give them everything they needed. Yet, they focused on the physical symbol, "give us this 'bread' always."

Jesus finally had to come right out and say it, "Don't you get it? I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." Jesus told the people directly that he is the sign, he is the miracle, he is the manna in the wilderness, and he is the bread of life sent to give life to the world.

I wonder if the crowd felt a little sheepish after they made Jesus explain this idea to such an extent? We shake our heads and ask, how could they be so slow, but we do the same thing every day? It is no secret that most of us are driven by our desires. That what we want outweighs what we need or the needs of others. It is a part of human nature.

This week as we come to the table for a meal with family and friends we will all ask ourselves what we are thankful for? Are we thankful for what we have done for ourselves, are we thankful that God has given us what we want, or are we thankful for all the blessings of God, those that empowered us, and those that challenged us to become more than what we are?

As we worship together today we have to ask ourselves, what are we looking for? Are we guilty of looking for miracles or chasing the abundance represented by the loaves and fishes? Are we curiosity seekers, wishing to be there when something new happens or wanting to be seen by others? Or are we pursuing the interests of the Kingdom of God and giving thanks for all our blessings?

Rick Lawrence is a Christian author, podcaster, and speaker. He travels the globe leading conferences and workshops on how to grow churches and minister effectively. In his book, "The Jesus-Centered Life", Lawrence writes about a day when he was leading a workshop for ministry leaders and pastors.

He felt depressed and worn out. The material and techniques he usually covered were not exciting

*Looking* continued page 6...

...**Looking** continued from page 5 anymore. So, he decided to throw away all his notes and ask those in the workshop to talk about how Jesus was active in their lives. He said for the next two hours the room was electric with the presence of Christ. He had never felt more passionate about a workshop before.

After the workshop Lawrence attended other events and became depressed again. He felt terrible and could not put his finger on it. He found a big comfy chair in the middle of the conference arena and as he sat there watching people walk by, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, why do I feel this way? Why do I feel so terrible?"

Lawrence said that he heard Jesus' voice almost audibly reply, "Because you are bored with everything but me now." There is nothing in the world that can give you what Christ can give you. So, what are you looking for? Your answer will make all the difference to your life? Amen.



#### **COMMANDMENTS** by Jennifer Garrison Brownell

*Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way, they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.*

- 1 Timothy 6:17-19 (NIV)

In a Bible study, someone commented, "I don't know why people think they can turn to scripture for comfort. I usually just find a challenge." I don't think she was speaking about this particular passage, but she might have been.

I mean, I'm not always challenged by this passage. It depends on whether I'm the commander or the commandee.

Am I the recipient of this letter, the one responsible for wagging a finger at some televangelist with a garage full of expensive cars? I'm happy to command that guy to be humble, and good, and faithful.

*Continued next column...*

But if I'm the one being commanded to put my hope not in wealth but in God? Suddenly I have 101 reasons why I need to put my faith in my savings account rather than prayer. But passages like this one remind me that if I can take my eyes off my check book, God's path is right there, showing the way to the life that's really life.

**Prayer:** Holy One, help me receive the commandments you have placed in your Word, not only for me, but also only for me. 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](https://www.facebook.com/fcchsv), [twitch.tv/fcchsv](https://www.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