



A CHRISTMAS TRANSITION

As soon as we came back from our Thanksgiving celebration in Indianapolis Patti asked for help to get our Christmas Tree out of storage and she began to decorate the house for Christmas. Every day she does a little bit more as she readies our home, and our family for the festivities to come. Even though we are in the midst of Advent I am not looking ahead to the New Year and the challenges and opportunities it will contain. Sometimes this planning makes Advent a little disjointed, especially when the days are filled with other distractions. But, the decorations are still up as is our tree, we are buying and wrapping presents for friends and loved ones, and I am still working on my Christmas Sunday sermon.

Speaking of new adventures Patti just started a new job; she is now working from home with an insurance company whose clients are active military members and their families. She is in training right now, so she is not sure what her real job will be like, but so far she has enjoyed it, and her commute cannot be beaten. This change led me to think about other families and individuals who may be going through a similar transition. What about people who have just moved to our community? How will they celebrate Advent and Christmas? What about people in our community who will be alone during the holiday season, do they have friends that will care for them and invite them to meals and gatherings? Will they get out into the community as we celebrate? Will they find a place where they are welcome to worship and greet the New Year that God has provided?

The church must reach out to these people who require friendship, care, and comfort, not just during the holidays but throughout the year. They could be soldiers away from their homes and families, someone new to Huntsville or our area, the elderly whose families live far away, or young families who have just moved to begin a new life. Whatever the case may be, it is important that we are hospitable and welcoming to them, that we invite them to church events, but more importantly, we invite them to our homes and into our lives so we can share our insight and also our love and joy.

This year let us become an inviting church, not just one that welcomes people that walk in the door, but a community that reaches out to others and invites them into our congregation and our communal journey with Christ. We have a lot to offer and Jesus calls us to reach out to the ends of the earth to share the good news. On the way, we will meet people who are different than us, and who hold dissimilar views or beliefs, but if we open our hearts and minds we can learn from these people as well, and together we can build a community that works to unite rather than divide, to care rather than to show contempt, and that loves one another. I hope you have a very merry Christmas, Amen.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING REMINDER

There will be a Congregational Meeting regarding the 2023 budget on Sunday, December 11, following the worship service .

The *Journey* is published on the first and third Monday of the month.
The **deadline** for *Journey* submissions is **Thursday, December 15**, at Noon. Email to: publisher@fcc-hsv.org

3209 Whitesburg Drive, Huntsville, Alabama 35802
Telephone: 256-881-0150



Join us on Sunday morning, December 11th at 9:30 am as the FCC Choir and guest musicians present "A Festival of Christmas Carols".

Listen to beautiful singing, learn the history behind these classic pieces, and sing along with some of the most-loved Christmas Carols ever written. We look forward to seeing you there!

FUNKY CHRISTMAS FASHION SHOW!

Hello all! Get ready for 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 individuals 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!



**HUNTSVILLE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
NEEDS FOR DEC 2022**

Spaghetti Sauce, Corn Muffin Mix (...just add water kind), Stuffing Mix (for the Holidays), Canned Fruit, Shelf-Stable Milk (cartons appreciated), Peanut Butter & Jelly (all kinds appreciated), Instant Potato Flakes (...just add water kind), Canned Meat (tuna/chicken/Vienna sausages), Toilet Paper, Gallon Sized Zip-Locks, Baby Diapers (sizes 5, and 6, appreciated), and NEW Fabric or Plastic Sacks with Handles (no paper). Drop your contributions off on the cart in the Sanctuary Lobby. Thank you.



**LONG TERM
PRAYER CONCERNS**



- A.J. Arisco, relative of Pam Clasgens
- Ken Brown
- Harold Buie
- Rebecca Davison, grandmother of Alyssa Burton
- Vonda Dihm
- Lynn Harris, daughter of Mary Spencer
- Kathy Sharp Heim, friend of Lauren Carter
- Judith Hodge
- Dottie Dale Hughes
- Lynn Hughes, brother of Jackie Sameck
- Kalyn Kilgore, daughter of Rodger & Mona Qualls
- Tom & Gail Killough
- Stephen McCreary
- Nita Raessler, sister-in-law of Walt Keller
- Matthew Richardson, friend of Matthew Brown
- Mary Spencer
- Rev. Bob Stegall
- Jay & Cynthia Wright, parents of Holly Ahlbin

Long term prayer concerns are published once a month in the *Journey*. **Please** keep the church office informed of the status of individuals you put on the list.

REGIONAL PRAYER REQUESTS
Westwood Christian Church, Pensacola, FL
Ambassadors for Christ, Greenville, AL

ATTENDANCE
November 27: Worship Service: 94
Small Groups (During week & Sunday): 15
December 4: Worship Service: 94
Small Groups (During week & Sunday): 39

NAOMI CIRCLE

"A safe space for grieving hearts"
We will be meeting (2nd Wednesday at 6pm) virtually over zoom for the months of December, January and February. If you would like the zoom link please contact Sharifa Love-Rutledge at *****

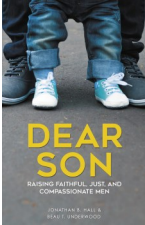
CHRISTMAS CARD POST OFFICE



It's back! The mailbox for our Christmas card drop-off is up and running. Please remember to look for your cards each Sunday. We do not mail any of the cards and will close the Christmas Card Post Office after the season is over on January 8th.

DEAR SON

by Jonathan B. Hall



Rev. Jonathan Hall, son of John and Jill Hall, has written a book on raising faithful, just and compassionate men.

A copy is available in the church office. If you would like to read it, please see Lynn on Mondays or Tuesdays. The book is also available on Amazon.

FINANCIAL AID FOR NEEDY ADULTS

The Forgotten Ones

For several years, Community Outreach has donated financially during December to the Adult Services Unit of DHR and Enable (formerly CASA) to be used throughout the year in their work with needy adults. This is often a forgotten population but one that is frequently in desperate need, particularly in these difficult times. As you make your Christmas list, please consider a donation to these two agencies. Checks can be made to FCC with CO December project in the memo line. The project will go through the end of December. Your support will make a difference as these organizations help our community's vulnerable adults. Thank you for caring.

Community Outreach is asking for regular donations of hygiene products such as: sanitary pads, tampons, and/or period underwear (period-proof underwear is a relatively new period product that looks and feels like regular underwear.). The donations will support girls at three schools - Huntsville Junior High School, McNair School, Morris School- who do not have funds to purchase these products. A donation site is located in the church Narthex. Please consider helping with this needed project.

Margaret J. Vann

GIFTS TO THE 2022 CHRISTMAS OFFERING WILL STRENGTHEN THE ALABAMA-NORTHWEST FLORIDA REGION FOR ITS MINISTRY.

All Regions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) have made a commitment to the document "Marks of a Faithful Regional Church." This document directs and describes the ministry to which Regions are called. These ministries are highlighted in the 2022 Christmas Offering promotion.

"CARING FOR CONGREGATIONS"

A major part of the ministry of the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region is caring for its congregations. Just as congregations provide care for their participants - nurturing them spiritually, offering pastoral care and support, and connecting them to opportunities for service - so also do Regions invest much time and energy into the well-being of congregations.

Every program that is offered by the Region (camps, retreats, workshops, etc.) is intended to be an addition to each congregation's own programming. These opportunities are intended to strengthen participants for their roles within their home congregations. In this way, the Region supports congregations.

Regions support congregations as they have special needs. Congregations that are facing a transition in ministerial leadership rely on the Region to guide them through the process of seeking a new minister. Congregational leaders receive training and guidance from the Region to be better equipped for their roles of

Continued page 4

service. Congregations in conflict call on the Region for help in mediating and moving past the conflict in healthy ways.

Regions support congregations on special occasions and remind them of their kinship with other Disciples' congregations.

The Region communicates with congregations through letters, emails, and websites to inform them of opportunities for involvement.

Congregations know they are not alone as they seek to be faithful to God. They call on the Region as a valuable partner with them along the journey. Caring for congregations is a major part of what a Region is called to do.

"CALLING OUT AND DEVELOPING LEADERS"

The Alabama-Northwest Florida Region has an important role in helping persons discern God's call upon their lives. Through involvement in Regional ministries, persons often discover gifts and graces that the Region helps channel into leadership roles, whether through clergy or lay leadership.

Many ordained ministers in the church remember their experiences in Regional camps, when they were teenagers, as being the times when they began to sense the call of God upon their lives. The camp setting, along with the encouragement of caring adults, provides an opportunity for young people to begin asking meaningful questions about God's desire for their lives. Regional camp experiences have also been important times for adult counselors to grow in their own sense of call into Christian service.

The Region's Committee on the Ministry works directly with ministers and ministry candidates. Through nurturing and supportive relationships, enlistment of mentors and advisors, and allocation of financial resources and scholarships, this committee helps leaders and future leaders be equipped for the ministry to which they are called.

"CARING FOR MINISTERS"

Every person in ministry also needs to receive ministry. Ministry can be rewarding in so many ways, but it can also be challenging, frustrating, and exhausting. Ministry is spiritually and emotionally demanding. Ministers are expected to be at their best in every ministry situation in which they find themselves. Congregations deserve to have pastors who are healthy, focused, and engaged in their ministry. The Region plays a vital role in helping ministers be at their best. A few ministries aimed at fostering healthy ministry include:

- Pastoral counseling services through the Pastoral Institute
- "Healthy Boundaries" workshops
- Colleague Group ministry to encourage mutual care and development between ministry colleagues
- Retreats for clergy and spouses
- A Ministry Support Network which is in regular contact with ministers to befriend, mentor, and encourage them in their ministry
- Pastoral support for ministers and their families in times of stress or emergency through Regional staff
- Providing grants for continuing education, spiritual enrichment, or to address financial emergencies for ministers and their families
- Promoting Week of the Ministry to celebrate persons in the ministry

All gifts to the 2022 Christmas Offering are directed to the ministries of the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region. Please give generously!

THE CHRISTMAS OFFERING WILL BE COLLECTED - DECEMBER 11 - 25

Make checks to First Christian Church with Christmas Offering in the memo/note line. Checks may be placed in the offering bowl on Sunday or mailed to the church office. You may make an offering using the church's PayPal account and noting Christmas Offering when you submit payment. (Go to fcc-hsv.org/who-we-are/how-to-give/ and scroll down to the Donate button.)

An announcement from Brad Clasgens, AV team leader...

For much of this week, and especially Saturday, the AV Team pulled together a group of volunteers for a work session - in effect, a "stringing and soldering party" - to upgrade and hide most of the audio connections in the chancel area. AND - a big portion of this this was successfully accomplished while the SEC Championship was being televised!

We've installed a new rack behind the wall to house all the connections for the microphones and speakers.

We've removed two audio control panels that were sitting on the floor behind the organ and piano and installed them into this new rack.

We've run new audio lines under the floors to all six floor boxes.

We've completed hard wiring five of our main audio channels. (We have about eight more to do, plus a few speaker channels.)

And the biggest news...we've removed about 350 feet of cords running across the chancel floor, and there will be more removed in the coming weeks. You'll continue to see a much neater appearance, and continued improvement in sound quality. In total, the team invested some 30 man-hours on this week's project.

I'd especially like to thank Nathan Lee for taking the design lead on this project, as well as our fine team of solderers and stringers:

- David Updegraff
- Monty Love
- Jon Ahlbin
- Andy Herron, with some assistance from Miranda

We'll be scheduling another work session in the coming weeks, to finish the job. Then we'll begin focusing on improving the video quality of our livestream, and continue to simplify all of our AV processes, to make them simpler for our volunteers.