



# The Journey

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[www.fcc-hsv.org](http://www.fcc-hsv.org)

## SPECIAL OFFERING FOR THE ALABAMA-NORTHWEST FLORIDA REGION

In addition to its more than 3,200 congregations and its General Ministries, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) expresses itself in 31 geographic areas called Regions. The Regions cover every part of the United States and Canada. The primary nature of Regional Ministries is to look after the congregations in their regions. Regions have two main purposes: nurture and mission. They are called to fulfill the mission of the Church by taking the lead in developing new forms of ministry in mission, witness and service. Regions also are nurturing agents that provide support, guidance and pastoral care to ministers and congregations.

Additionally, Regions play the role of counselor and advisor in matters such as the standing and credentialing of ministers, relocation of pastors, and filling vacant ministerial positions, among other responsibilities. Regions help find interim ministers for churches that are without full-time pastors.

Regional ministers often serve as mentors to congregational pastors. They offer training to clergy and laity and assistance in cases of difficulties between ministers and congregations. Regions call their staffs, own and manage their own property, determine their budgets and administer regional finances within their available resources. They hold regional assemblies and develop procedures for seeking counsel from the Office of General Minister and President. Regions may vary in size and shape. They share equal standing with general and congregational ministries.

Regional ministry includes connecting people who help connect other people to Jesus. Through this connection with our region our congregation, together with other congregations in our Region, organize summer church camps, call and equip pastors and other church leaders, and share stories of what God is doing within and beyond our walls. Our support makes this work possible.

Imagine how many people have come to faith and will come to faith in Jesus because so many Disciples in our Region, and throughout the world, are continually working together developing new ways to invite new generations to meet Jesus and help them to grow in their faith! In the weeks ahead we bring an extra gift in honor of those who first told us about the newborn King. As we do this, we help our Region continue connecting and supporting those who will share that Good News with children, youth and adults in the coming year. I hope you will support the work of the Alabama-Northwest Florida region as it builds the family of God. Amen.

## VIRTUAL CONGREGATIONAL BUDGET MEETING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20, 3:00 P.M.

Our December Congregational Meeting is not being held in person due to COVID-19. Instead, we will be having our first ever virtual Congregational Meeting. There are two ways to participate.

To join the meeting on computer (equipped with camera & microphone), tablet, or smart phone with internet access: **Not Published Online**

To call in and listen by telephone (if you do not have access by computer, tablet, or smart cell phone) dial 1 312 626 6799 (your carrier rates will apply). You will be prompted to enter the meeting ID: **Not Published Online**

Deadline for the *Journey* is **Thursday, December 17**, 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.**

**GIFTS TO THE 2020 CHRISTMAS OFFERING WILL  
STRENGTHEN THE ALABAMA-NORTHWEST  
FLORIDA REGION FOR ITS MINISTRY.**

The mission of the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region is to encourage and equip its congregations and pastors for the ministry of Jesus Christ in local communities and throughout the world, while seeking to nurture them into deeper relationship with God, with each other, and with the whole Church.

We are all experiencing 2020 as a most unusual year. Many of our normal practices have been eliminated or modified. This is also true in the life of the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region. In-person gatherings have largely been suspended. Gathering for camps, retreats, workshops, has not happened. However, many things have not changed. The Region continues to offer support for clergy and congregations. The Regional staff and officers have worked to maintain the full function of the Region. Through the use of technology, the Region has provided regular communication and connection with clergy through Zoom meetings. Congregations have worked with Regional staff in search processes during this pandemic and new pastors have been called to several of our congregations. Staff and volunteers offered a meaningful virtual summer camp experience in August. Meetings of decision-making bodies have continued as they normally would and plans are underway for 2021 in hopes that there will be a return to in-person activities. The support of congregations through the 2020 Christmas Offering is needed as we set our sights on 2021.

All gifts to the 2020 Christmas Offering are directed to the ministries of the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region. Please give generously! **Please write "Christmas Offering" in the memo line of your check and place it in the offering bowl or mail it to the church office.**

**Calendar**

**December 20**

Virtual Congregational Meeting, 3:00 P.M.

**December 24, Christmas Eve**

Church Office Closes at 12:30 p.m

4 p.m. Outdoor (kid friendly) Service

5 p.m. Sanctuary (traditional) Service

**December 25, Christmas Day**

Church Office Closed

**December 28 - No Journey**

**December 31, New Year's Eve**

Church Office Closes at 12:30 p.m.

**CHURCH DIRECTORY CHANGES**

**Not Published Online**

**ANGEL TREE**

It is that wonderful time of year again when we can bring out Christmas sweaters and other festive attire! The youth will be hosting our 2nd annual funky Christmas fashion show again this December! Due to COVID-19 health restrictions this will take place virtually on **Facebook!** Voting will be going on through December 16th! Along with the fun part of this activity **we are also asking for donations** to help sponsor four local children's Christmas this year! **Please send your donations to the office or drop them off in the offering plate with "Angel Tree" on the subject line!**



**THE VINE PASTORAL COUNSELING CENTER  
COMBINED FEDERAL CAMPAIGN DONATIONS**

First Christian Church has supported The Vine Pastoral Counseling Center in Huntsville for many of its 21 years of service. The Vine is a participant in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) for 2021, which is open until Jan 15, 2021. If you are a Federal civilian, postal, or military employee, please consider choosing The Vine (CFC #53497) as one of your charitable donations for 2021.

See [vine-counseling.com](http://vine-counseling.com) for more information about the Vine.

Thank you,  
Mary Ann Anderson



**THIS WEEK'S FOOD BASKET** is in honor of Rodger Qualls' birthday by Mona Qualls.

### “ZOOM” INTO A BABY SHOWER

Please join us on Zoom as we celebrate with Kyle and Carrie Love on Sunday, January 10, from 2-3 pm. Their baby is due in February!

They are registered at [babylist.com](http://babylist.com). If you prefer to buy locally please have your gift to the church by January 3. You can leave it in the office during the week or in the Narthex on Sunday.

Let's shower Kyle and Carrie with our congratulations upon the arrival of their first child!

Watch the Journey for Zoom information!

### FINANCIAL AID FOR THE FORGOTTEN ONES, NEEDY ADULTS

Needy Adults are often a forgotten population but one that is frequently in desperate need, particularly in these difficult times. For several years, Community Outreach has contributed financially during December to the Adult Services Unit of DHR and CASA to be used throughout the year in their work with needy adults.

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 to our community's vulnerable adults who are supported by DHR and CASA.

Thank you for caring, Community Outreach

### CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

#### CHRISTMAS STOCKINGS REPLACEMENT PROJECT

This year we won't be doing our traditional stocking filling with Christmas Charities Year Round (CCYR). They have enough stockings committed for that project this year and suggested an alternative, particularly regarding dealing with COVID19 and providing a safe way to donate toys. The Chamber of Commerce/team from Cummings Research Park created a Toy Drive Wish List s on Amazon.

If you have an Amazon account, and would like to support CCYR, follow this link [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) and it will take you to the CCYR Toy Drive Wish List. Select the items you wish to purchase from the list and add them to our cart. **When you check out you will see Julia Kaye as a delivery option**, she is the Chamber of Commerce contact who is collecting the toys. Select her as the delivery option for your order and check out.

Thank you for your support, CWM



### WEEKLY PRAYER CONCERNS



Not Published Online

**CONDOLENCES** to the family of  
Not Published Online

**REGIONAL PRAYER REQUESTS**  
New Salem Christian Church, Hayneville, AL

We are temporarily publishing, as space allows in the printed version of the *Journey*, the prayer concerns that are usually 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](mailto:publisher@fcc-hsv.org) or call the church office at 256-881-0150 and leave a message. **Please notify the Pastors or the church office if you are going to the hospital and would like to be contacted**

## Sanctuary Service Protocols

- In person worship is at 9:30 a.m.
- Sunday school classes, the nursery, and youth gatherings are temporarily suspended.
- Food, coffee, and other hospitality services are also suspended.
- 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. We ask all members and children to wear masks.
- Attendance is limited (approximately 75) to the ability to social distance and the service will be broadcast (107.9) to the parking lot in the event of overflow attendance.
- **Attendees will wear face coverings/masks inside the church and practice social distancing (6 feet apart for non-household members) for everyone's safety.**
- Enter the church through the Bell Tower Garden/Narthex doors. The doors by the church office will be locked.
- Greeters will provide hand sanitizer to all who enter and provide masks for those who have not brought their own.
- Ushers will seat people down the center/side aisles
- No choir/congregational singing.
- Following the service, rows will **leave by the side aisles** with the east aisle exiting through Family Services and the west aisle through the Narthex doors. (There will be directional signs.)
- Offerings may be placed in the brass plate when exiting the sanctuary or sent by mail.
- Please, **no congregating indoors** before or after service - social distancing outdoors.
- **Anyone with any symptoms will remain home and celebrate virtually for at least 14 days.**
- **Notify the church office immediately if you develop symptoms after attending a service.**

## BURNING FOR CHRISTMAS

BY MATTHEW LANEY

*Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be, waiting for the coming day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.*

2 Peter 3:11-13 (NRSV)

As a child, I received two vastly different messages about forest fires: 1) forest fires are bad, and 2) forest fires are good.

On the one hand, Smokey the Bear told me “Only you can prevent forest fires!” And I believed him. I had the power not to play with matches anywhere, especially in the woods. If I went camping, I learned where and how to safely build, tend, and extinguish a campfire.

On the other hand, I also learned that forest fires play an important role in our ecosystem. They clear out dead wood that would take much longer to break down. Forest fires replenish the soil and provide nutrition for the next generation of trees and plants. Some species of trees actually depend on fire to germinate their seeds. Many creatures are very at home in scorched forests.

With all due respect to Smokey, 2 Peter’s vision is more attuned to the value of holy fire to clear out the dead wood, replenish the soil, and germinates seeds of the new heavens and the new earth where righteousness is at home.

The real burning question in this passage is: “What sort of person ought you to be” while we wait for the fire to be kindled: pessimistic or hopeful, grumpy or grateful? Will we see the fire as the end of the world, or the beginning of another? What in your life needs to be burned up or melted down to make way for new life?

**Prayer** - Fiery Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me. Melt me. Mold me. Fill me. Use me.

