



The Journey

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Deadline for the *Journey* is **Wednesday, December 21**, at Noon publisher@fcc-hsv.org

RUDOLPH AND JESUS

Back in 1938 the author of “Rudolph, The Red Nosed Reindeer,” Robert May, was an advertising copywriter for Montgomery Ward. His boss said, “I want you to write a folk story for a catalogue booklet this year. We’ve been buying these little Christmas books for children each year, but now we are going to put out our own to save money. Write us a good story.”

The man had a child at home and his wife dying with a terminal illness. He felt little inspiration for such a task. It was only an additional burden on an already heavy load. He paced about his small office and worried. Finally, he had this dream of writing about reindeer and after several failures he finally revised his story.

Robert May read his revised script to his dying wife and child. The child’s eyes began to sparkle. The author poured his own inferiority, his own sense of failure into the character of Rudolph. The struggle of the author’s life was cast into the story of the red-nosed reindeer. You know the rest of the story (as Paul Harvey might say) ... “Rudolph with your nose so bright, won’t you guide my sleigh tonight!”

Rudolph had this very shiny nose, a hidden asset, but all the other reindeer laughed at him and made fun of him. Every parent knows the pain when their child is the recipient of such cruel activity. The pain of the child becomes the pain of the parent. The reindeer obviously didn’t like Rudolph’s inherent worth as an individual UNTIL it was proved that the “disability” of that red nose could actually be useful. Rudolph was not accepted until he had done something heroic for the others, and then in spite of all his apparent oddities, and differences, Rudolph is accepted. The song says it all, “**then**, all the other reindeer loved him ...”

Why is it that the world cannot see that there is inherent, God-granted worth in each individual regardless of what they can or cannot do? Why does the world withhold its love UNTIL value is proven and affirmed by the Santas and various authority figures of this world? Isn’t it true that we are of worth because of *who we are* and not *what we do*?

Thanks be to God that Christmas is the season wherein God affirms our worth amidst our weakness and humanity. We are accepted and loved by God not because of “how brightly our nose shines in the darkness” or what we can ultimately do and offer.

God came to earth at Christmas in the form of human flesh not because we were worthy of that coming, but rather in spite of the fact we were unworthy. God came in the form of a baby and died for us on the cross because of *who God is*. There must be some **connection between red noses and blood stained nail pierced hands**. Why not discover what it is this Christmas season?

Reach out this Christmas and love someone, not because of what they have done for you, but because of who they are in God’s sight. Allow someone to join in “your reindeer games” *before* they are affirmed by some white-bearded, jolly man in a red suit as being of “utilitarian value.”

God certainly has affirmed your value before you proved yourself. Isn’t that what the Incarnation and the Cross is all about? God’s way is to offer **unconditional love**, not love that is based on how one might benefit the giver of that love. The practice of such love can truly make this Christmas the Mass of Christ’s Presence in your life.

See you Christmas Eve and Christmas Sunday,

Pastor Cameron

3209 Whitesburg Drive, Huntsville, Alabama 35802 Telephone: 256-881-0150 Office Hours: 9am - 5pm M-F
Sunday Worship Services: 8:15 & 10:30 a.m. Christian Education for all ages - 9:15 a.m.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25

9:00 am Sunday School
10:30 am Unified Service

Old Testament Isaiah 52:7-10
Epistle Hebrews 1:1-4
Sermon Text John 1:1-14
Sermon "Thank You for Coming"

SERVING AT THE TABLE

10:30 Dave Crockett & Lisa Fitzgerald

COMMUNION PREPARATION

Delores Edgeton

SERVING COMMUNION

10:30 Elders Serve

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP

Dian Douglas

SUNDAY'S FOOD BASKET is in honor of grand-daughter Ann Lawrence Hampton's birthday by John Paul Hampton.

CHILDREN WORSHIP & WONDER

Worship with families this morning

YOUNG DISCIPLES (Meets 2nd & 4th Sundays)

Worship with families this morning

THE CHURCH OFFICE WILL CLOSE at 12:30 pm on Friday, December 23 and reopen at 9:00 am on Tuesday, December 27.

HELP IS NEEDED in the Nursery and Toddler rooms on Sunday mornings. Please see the sign up poster in the Commons and sign up now for first or second shift on one Sunday in December and January. We need loving hands to assist our attendants.

IRS CREDIT FOR 2016 GIVING

Thank you so much for your tithes and offerings; they have a tremendous impact on the missions and ministries of our church. Please remember that all contributions toward 2016 giving must be received by the church office **before 12:30 pm on Friday, December 30, 2016** (that is when the office closes for New Year's Eve) to be credited toward your 2016 giving. However, mailed contributions will be credited toward 2016 giving as long as they are **postmarked by December 31, 2016**. (If mailing, make sure to note collection times to ensure the appropriate postmark.)

Post dated checks received after December 31 (unless received by mail postmarked December 31 or prior) will be credited to your 2017 giving and not 2016 per IRS regulations..

CHURCH CHRISTMAS CARDS MAIL STATION

Our Church Mailbox is back until January 1 so that we can exchange Christmas cards among the congregation. If you will deposit them in the large Christmas Mailbox, we will sort them and put them out for you to pick up. You will be able to pick them up in the Commons Area at the "Post Office". **We will not mail these cards**, so only the name is needed on the envelope. **You will have until January 8th to pick them up.**

POINSETTIAS FOR THE ADVENT SEASON

If you would you like to honor a friend or remember a loved one with a poinsettia for our Advent tree, please make a \$10.00 donation to cover the cost of a poinsettia, and list your donor information on the sign-up sheet posted on the flower sheet across from McMains Hall. Make your check payable to FCC, write "poinsettia" in the memo line, and drop it in the offering plate or church office. If you have any questions, please contact Margaret Vann

ATTENDANCE	12/11	12/18
First Service Worship	39	37
Sunday School	38	31
Second Service Worship	75	114
Children's Church	5	9
Young Disciples	4	NA
Total Worship	123	160

2017 FLOWERS & FOOD BASKETS

The 2017 sign up charts for **FLOWERS & FOOD BASKETS** are up and located across the hall from McMains Hall. Remember a friend, anniversary, birthday, or other special occasion. Donations are \$25.00 with checks made out to First Christian Church and "Flowers" or "Food Basket" on the notation line.

THANK YOU!

We want to express much heartfelt gratitude to MF1, The Young Adults, and our greater church family for such a sweet and generous shower to celebrate the arrival of baby Jacob Ahlbin! Jacob was born December 8th, and we are all doing well. We are so grateful for your love and support, and we can't wait to introduce him to you! We are so blessed to be a part of this caring church family

Holly, Jon & Big Brother James Ahlbin

A STUDY OF WORDS

Beginning January 15, the Bethany Sunday School Class which meets in the Parlor will undertake a study of Biblical words. Words such as: spirit, soul, righteousness, faith, and God, to name a very few. We will look at the Greek and/or Hebrew roots, and study various passages where these words are found. This study promises to be very interesting and informative. Please come and take part in this study if this is of interest to you.

Please stop by the "FCC Post Office" in the Commons Area and pick up your Christmas Cards. **They will not be mailed out so you need to come by and pick them up by January 8th.**

FCC PRESCHOOL/ELEMENTARY CLASS NEEDS YOUR HELP FOR A SHEEP

As part of Heifer International, the preschool/elementary class is raising money for a sheep. **A coffee container is on the coffee table in the Commons Area.** Please help us raise enough for a sheep.

Thank You, Preschool/Elementary Class

CONGRATULATIONS to Glen & Laura Hiller on the birth of their twin girls Kathy Alice and Isobel Lee on December 13.

2017 CWM WOMEN'S WINTER DAY RETREAT

Saturday, January 21, 2017, 9 am to 4 pm

Open to all women of the church, but space is limited. Vann's home: 1808 Covewood Drive SE, Huntsville. Retreat leader is Amanda Ragland, PhD, director The Vine Pastoral Counselling Center. More information to come. Contact Margaret J. Vann, 256.533.4213, if you are interested.

31 FLAVORS SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS will not meet Christmas Day and New Year's Day

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND THANK YOU FROM WESTLAWN MIDDLE SCHOOL AND SHOP WITH A HERO STUDENTS

