



The Journey

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ARE WE READY TO GROW?

The Ash Wednesday service is one of my favorites in the life of the church. It is the traditional beginning of the season of Lent and holds within it a reminder of our own mortality, our sin, and our brokenness, but ultimately it is about the power of Christ to forgive, heal and reform us. Wearing the cross of ashes, remembering that from dust I have been made and to dust I will return is not depressing or soul wrenching, it is life affirming; so as we continue to celebrate Lent we also remember the promise of new and abundant life, a reminder that while we are a speck in the eyes of time, to God we are unique and we have meaning.

I read a story once about a ripening sunflower. Somewhere in the middle of the crowded seed head, one seed slowly pushed its way past the others. It was simply getting too crowded with all those plumping seeds being squeezed together. Before readying herself for the big leap, the seed took a deep breath, gathering all her courage around her, and in one final push, shoved her way out from the crowded seed head and catapulted into the empty air. Screaming at once with terror and exhilaration, she fell through the light-filled void to the ground below.

PLOP. She hit the ground with a thud. And then she realized, "Now what? Now that I'm free, now what? Who am I if not a member of the flower? Who am I if I'm not being crowded between my brothers and sisters? Who am I out here on my own?"

Then a bright red cardinal flew down to the ground beside her and answered her question, "Well, you are a Sunflower of course!" She was startled by his answer as she had only known herself to be a seed among a million other seeds. The cardinal then scooped her up into his beak, flew to another spot in the field, scraped a little hole in the dirt and plopped her into the ground. He then covered her with dirt and said, "Now wait right here. Before you know it, you will no longer be a seed. You will become the Sunflower that God made you to be." And then he flew away.

The seed grew quiet and as the cardinal had instructed, she waited. She waited as she felt the cool dirt around her and the warmth of the sun as it passed over her from dawn till dusk. She waited and drank the water that periodically filled the dirt around her. She waited. She rested. She slept.

Then one day, just as suddenly as the crowded feeling that had propelled her from the seed head of the majestic sunflower, she felt her body begin to quiver and shake; pulse and vibrate. She felt as if she was being torn in two, and that was exactly what was happening. In a fraction of a moment, the seed that she had always known herself to be suddenly fell away and she saw that she was now a bright green stalk, with tiny roots that began to reach deep into the soil, with arms of green that began to reach through the dirt and up toward the sun above. She was no longer the seed, but the beginnings of that which would soon become the majestic sunflower, just as the cardinal said she would be.

God places the seed of new life in each and every one of us. Often it takes time and patience to see what we will grow into, but that growth will occur and when that day happens we will know who we are called to be. Together we can be beauty, light, warmth, sustenance and hope for the rest of the world. Are we ready to take the leap? Are we ready to grow? Amen.

Pastor Paul

Deadline for the *Journey* is **Thursday, March 1**, at Noon publisher@fcc-hsv.org

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, FEBRUARY 25

Sermon Scripture Romans 4:13-25
 Sermon “Hoping Against Hope ”
 In the Pulpit Rev. Laura West

SERVING AT THE TABLE

8:15 Karen Ball & Dave Crockett
 10:30 Justin Givens & Frank Fitzgerald

COMMUNION PREPARATION

Lynn Abernathy

SERVING COMMUNION

8:15 Gayle Herber & Anita Wood
 Eddie & Valerie Parks
 10:30 Beverly Cannon & Marilee Keim
 Linda & Tré Davis
 Nancy Woodall

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP

Gayle Herber

SUNDAY’S FOOD BASKET is in memory of

Gavin W. Hooker by Jeff, Bryan, Tim,
 Jason, Will, Margaret Ann, Linda & Bill
 Hooker

CHILDREN WORSHIP & WONDER

Jesus and the Children
 Nancy Woodall, Tara Thorne,
 & Abby Allen

YOUNG DISCIPLES (Meets 2nd & 4th Sundays)

The Transfiguration of Jesus
 Karen Ball, Joe Brockway, Sarah Brockway
 & Ty Davis

Contact the Church Office, 256-881-0150, immediately if you own the red trailer parked behind the Sanctuary by the playground. It is about to be towed/sold.

CHURCH DIRECTORY UPDATE

Please contact the office, 256-881-0150 or publisher@fcc-hsv.org, if you have changed your contact information since the August Church Directory. Please provide us with your cell phone number, or numbers (max of 2), if you have dropped your land line since the last directory. Also, we can publish one (1) email address per family, so let us know if your email address has changed or if you would like to list an email address in the directory. Deadline is February 26.

WHY DO PEOPLE STAY AWAY FROM CHURCH?

Do you wonder what keeps people away from church? Adam Hamilton offers some insightful ideas in his book “When Christians Get It Wrong.” A short-term study of the book and DVD will be offered **Wednesday afternoons at 1:00 p.m., beginning February 14.** This study may take you out of your comfort zone as we examine our attitudes toward politics, salvation, sexuality, and science. A sign-up sheet is available on the table by the Commons Area (deadline is February 11). Contact Ann Thompson if you need further information.

OUCH! MY TOOTH HURTS!

For most of us, that means we call a dentist but for the poor in our community, that is not an option. In 2013, the Community Free Dental Clinic opened their doors to care for needy adults in Madison County and since that time, the Clinic has treated 6000 people. It is staffed with all volunteer dentists and assistants. There are also nurses who check vital signs of the patients and help with education on dental hygiene and other health issues. The Clinic mainly does extractions but is now able to do fluoride treatments as a preventive measure. CWM has selected the Clinic as our outreach project for February and invites you to join us by making a financial donation to this organization that is dependent on local revenue. You can make a check out to FCC with “dental clinic” in the memo line.

Thank you for caring.

ATTENDANCE	2/11	2/18
Ash Wednesday Service	NA	49
First Service Worship	42	44
Sunday School	42	37
Second Service Worship	88	91
Children’s Church	5	8
Young Disciples	7	NA
Total Worship	142	192

RUMMAGE SALE!

This year's Rummage Sale to benefit youth missions will be March 2 and 3. Set-up, donation receipt, sorting, and pricing will begin February 25. Please consider how you can contribute to this church-wide event. The volunteer sign-up is in the Commons and we will have yard signs so you can let your neighbors know about the sale. **You may begin dropping off sale items on February 25** (call the office and leave your name and number for home pick-up of large items). **We will NOT accept any tube style TVs or computer monitors.** We also will not accept any electronics or household appliances that do not work (unless the non-working part is identified), or that are extremely damaged. Items that belong together (remotes, lamp shades, etc.) should be boxed or taped together. Not only will this sale send our youth out to serve, it will also help our neighbors in need purchase quality items at very reasonable prices.

The collection for the Food Pantry is falling off, so Community Outreach is issuing a challenge to the congregation to try to get our item count up to 400 a month.



If each family brought at least one non-perishable item per Sunday, then we could easily make this count per month. This is such an inexpensive thing and so easy to do.

There are families in need of our help.
What do you say fellow members?

CAN'T MAKE IT TO CHURCH? Stream it live at:

www.fcchsvtech.weebly.com

MISS A SERMON? See previous sermons at:

www.fcc-hsv.org/sermons/

TAIZÉ SERVICE

Please join us on Sun., Feb. 25th at 6 pm for a Taizé service in the FCC sanctuary. For those unfamiliar with the Taizé experience, it is a quiet and reflective service of prayer, music and meditation.



Taizé is a community in France which was founded by Brother Roger and sheltered WWII refugees. They lived simple and quiet lives in order to not attract attention during this troubled time. They often went into the woods to sing and prayed silently to be respectful of all beliefs.

"Since my youth, I think that I have never lost the intuition that community life could be a sign that God is love, and love alone. Gradually the conviction took shape in me that it was essential to create a community with men determined to give their whole life and who would always try to understand one another and be reconciled, a community where kindness of heart and simplicity would be at the centre of everything." Brother Roger: "God is love alone"

Let's all carve some time out of our hectic schedules to worship, commune and recharge before the start of a new week.

PARLOR FURNITURE FOR SALE

The Renovation Committee has decided to replace the four outdated large items of furniture in the Parlor. The two old sofas and two wing-backed chairs are for sale to members for a reasonable price before they will be placed in the rummage sale. The committee will deliver them within the city. These will be available for delivery after February 19. New replacement furniture has been purchased.

Contact Bob Senn or Rick Shrout to make an offer.

Thank you, Renovation Committee