



WHEN DO WE OPEN AGAIN?

Whenever I host a meeting on Zoom, call someone on the phone, attend a church meeting or talk to someone (from a safe distance) in person, one question is always asked, when is the church going to reopen? That is a difficult question to answer. Some would say that the church never closed, we are still working, we are still hosting online services, meetings continue, money is collected, and mission work is done. The only difference seems to be that we are doing most of these items from home.

However, I know what people are truly asking, “When are things going to get back to normal? When will we be able to meet face to face, in the sanctuary, have a cup of coffee before the worship and then sing and praise God together?” In Alabama, churches are now allowed to reopen, while following safety precautions, but most congregations have chosen not to meet. The Southeast Area Ministerial Association in Huntsville met last week and all agreed that it was too soon to begin in-person worship services, but that when we do choose to meet, we would have to work together to make sure that the safety of our parishioners and the community around us is paramount.

In April, the White House and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued guidelines for reopening the country that focused on “gating” criteria for three “phases” of returning to normal. As per the CDC guidelines, older people, or those with another risk factor, are “strongly encouraged” to continue to stay home. However, our response to a pandemic is, inevitably, about much more than epidemiology or economics. It’s about morality. If we’re honest, we’re being asked to open up more than workplaces or churches. We have been asked to have a conversation about acceptable risk versus the freedom to choose.

While we figure out what, when, and how to open, we should take the opportunity to address this moral challenge directly. Will we become energized by the thought that we truly are in this together or will we let our own desires rule us? We all have to work hard to watch out for information that confirms our biases, and to check for different perspectives before assuming that a course of action is helpful, useful, or risky. Earlier this week I posted a Facebook Article that asked the church not to let COVID-19 divide us. Yes, we may have different ideas on what needs to happen, if we should open now or later, if we should wear masks, or if we should stay home or continue to go out. However, at church we should always look for the ways we can make others feel welcomed. Yes, wearing a mask is inconvenient, but if it makes our church members feel safe, we can wear them for an hour or two. Yes, the virus will change the way we worship for a time, but if it allows others to feel safe, we can worship in a new way for a few weeks or months. Above all, we should support one another during this time so we are all empowered to share the love of God with the world.

When continued below

Deadline for the *Journey* is **Thursday, May 28**, at Noon publisher@fcc-hsv.org

3209 Whitesburg Drive, Huntsville, Alabama 35802 Telephone: 256-881-0150 **Leave a message.**

Online Sunday Worship Services: 8:15 & 10:30 a.m. (Where to stream following page)

...*When* continued.

When will the church open again? When will things get back to normal? I do not know. But I do know that God is with us in this time and in all times, and that if we reflect, pray, and see to the needs of those around us, God will provide an answer and a way for the church to continue to be open and meet the needs of our community and the world, Amen.

GRATEFUL LIFE COMMUNITY CHURCH SUPPORT

Community Outreach and Christian Women's Ministries are partnering in May to solicit financial support for Grateful Life Community Church, our sister Disciples church in Huntsville whose primary ministry is to the disadvantaged and homeless members of our community. If you would like to contribute, please write your check to FCC with Grateful Life in the memo line and mail it to FCC. Thank you.

CORONAVIRUS ISOLATION ISSUES

If you or someone in your family are suffering from depression or loneliness during this pandemic please feel free to call Pastor Paul Allen at any time (see Church Directory). You may want to talk to him about other issues you are experiencing such as abuse or dependence on alcohol or drugs. He may be able to help you, or he may assist you in getting the help you need.

Either way, asking for help is the first step in getting better.

OFFICE SCHEDULE UPDATE

We are resuming regular office hours, Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., beginning this week. Only one staff member will be in the office per day. As a result, the office will be closed from 12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. for lunch. Others will still be working remotely from home when they are not in the church office.

Temporary office entrance. Our Early Childhood Ministry is scheduled to re-open on Monday, June 1, and will temporarily use the north entrance to the church (by the office) exclusively. If you must come by the church, you will need to use the office door approximately 40 feet to the left, as you face the building, of the north entrance. There is a doorbell button to press.

WEEKLY PRAYER CONCERNS

Not published online

CONDOLENCES to the family of *not published*, visitor, who recently passed.

REGIONAL PRAYER REQUEST

First Christian Church, Ft. Walton Beach, FL

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 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

ONLINE WORSHIP SERVICES

Stream live at 10:30 am on Sundays (or watch pervious services anytime) on YouTube at: www.youtube.com/channel/UCzQCRY8Vfa-IDhuqUnUhCKw

You may also stream services live on Sundays at 10:30 am (and see announcements throughout the week) on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/First-Christian-Church-DOC-Huntsville-AL-227266764409

Finally, stream services at 8:15 and 10:30 am on Sunday at: www.twitch.tv/fcchsv

JUNE BIRTHDAYS



Not published online

FEBRUARY CWM SERVICE

COMMUNITY FREE DENTAL CLINIC

The Community Free Dental Clinic was most appreciative for the \$600 donation from FCC at this time of great need. They have been slow to reopen but hope to resume services by early June. The need for emergency dental care has not slowed, but the clinic has multiple safety issues to navigate including the vulnerable age of most volunteers giving of their time and talent. There will be increased overhead with the added Personal Protection Equipment now needed. The outward community focus is always appreciated by those on the receiving end in the greater Huntsville area. Thanks to all for your generosity

THIS WEEK'S FOOD BASKET is in honor of Rebecca Howard's birthday by Don & Bev Williamson and in honor of Matt & Karen Ball's anniversary.

PARKING LOT PROJECT



New accessible sidewalk and curb cut leading to the Sanctuary, Parlor, and Family Services entrances.



New asphalt in the Sanctuary parking lot awaiting striping and new signage .

