



## RECONCILIATION MINISTRY

*by Jennifer Williams, Disciples Peace Fellowship intern*

*All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. – 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 NIV*

All have a prophetic call to justice.

We must uphold the dignity of other humans, other children of God and this means we cannot, must not and will not sit on the sidelines and stay silent. The definition of reconcile is “to restore friendly relations between.” Something is happening in the world that is not friendly. As minister of reconciliation for Reconciliation Ministry, Rev. April Johnson stated, “There needs to be a heart and mind shift in order to do this work.”

### A History

The birth of Reconciliation Ministry happened at the 1968 International Convention of the Christian Churches with Resolution 29 in which the denomination decided that churches should persistently pursue ways to address the sin of racism through resolutions and direct action. Christian Churches responded to the civil unrest at the time by raising over \$1 million in six months.

The initial focus of Reconciliation was to ensure programs be motivated by “a conscientious Christian concern for our brethren who before God are equal with us; and be directed...to the radical removal of basic underlying causes.” In 1969, the General Assembly adopted a resolution that called for the church to work for legislative change, to change the plight of the poor, “many of whom are minority persons.” The assumption at that time was that poverty was the root cause racism. By 1997, an emerging understanding of systematic racism came to the fore.

### Reconciliation Ministry Today

Reconciliation Ministry has offered an anti-racism training that equips churches to understand and confront systematic racism at the local level, to do the work we are faithfully called to do. Online trainings are more accessible during COVID-19. Johnson advises that in discomfort, transformation can happen. None of us can be the same after transformation.

And a new effort led by long-time trainer Rev. Yvonne Gilmore, begins July 30. Every two weeks into November a “Love is an Action Word” event will be online discussing different aspects of racism not only relating to African Americans but also other people of color.

*Reconciliation* continued next page...

Deadline for the *Journey* is **Thursday, August 13**, 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.**

...**Reconciliation** continued.

While Johnson is quick to celebrate the recent awareness and acknowledgement of churches, she said that justice ministries in the church setting are the least financially supported. She also commented on the churches ability to develop leadership among all people. Understanding hearts and minds need changing, Johnson praised young activists that are using the education of the issues, doing something about it, and being part of the movement. She finished by saying "We all need to follow their lead."

The church is all about dignity and extending it to all people.

The table is set. All are welcome. All are worthy.

Now is the time to move into action.

#### COMMUNITY OUTREACH IN AUGUST

Our focus in August is Morris Elementary/Middle School, a Title 1 school. To prepare for the students' return to classrooms after the first 9 weeks of remote learning, Morris has specifically asked for disinfectant wipes, disinfectant spray, hand sanitizer, facial tissue, disposable face masks, and re-useable (not disposable) water bottles instead of the usual variety of school and hygiene supplies.

You may drop off items at the church office, but please call first to ensure someone is there to let you in. The normal north entrance is reserved for ECM staff and children. only Use the church office door, there is an orange sign with Church Office about 40 feet east of the north entrance, and a door bell to press. Monetary donations are welcome and may be mailed to FCC. Thanks for your generosity.

Go, Morris Eagles!

**THIS WEEK'S FOOD BASKET** is in honor of Annie Jo Wood's 90th birthday by Randy & Anita Wood; and in memory of Betty Landrith, who would have been 90,.by Pat Blackman.

#### WEEKLY PRAYER CONCERNS

**Not published online.**

**CONDOLENCES** to the family of Dr. Ed Rice, who passed on August 4.

#### REGIONAL PRAYER REQUEST

Cottondale Christian Church  
Cottondale, 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**



### 9:00 AM SUNDAY DRIVE-IN/TAILGATE

#### WORSHIP SERVICE

You are invited to come in your vehicle as a family unit and you can stay in your car or you can bring chairs to sit in your parking space. **The service is broadcast on FM 107.9** (limited to the parking lot area) so you may tune into the service on the radio in your vehicle. There is also a public address system for those sitting outside their vehicles. We ask that you maintain social distancing and that if you leave your car you will wear a mask. **Please bring your own communion elements.** They will be blessed and we will partake together.

Drive in service attendance: June 19, 55; June 26, 51; August 2, 52; and August 9, 50.

#### FCC ONLINE

If you use Facebook, be sure to click Like and Follow (when you click on Follow, select See First) to keep up-to-date with church activities.

[www.facebook.com/fchsv/](http://www.facebook.com/fchsv/)

You may view previous sermons and other church videos on Youtube at [www.youtube.com/channel/UCzQCRY8Vfa-IDhuqUnUhCKw](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzQCRY8Vfa-IDhuqUnUhCKw) (if you have a Youtube account, click on Subscribe and the Bell icon to get notifications when a new video is posted) or on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/pg/fchsv/videos/](http://www.facebook.com/pg/fchsv/videos/) (see Facebook Like and Follow directions above.)

#### CWM WOMEN OF FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Do you wake up each day and say, "Thank you, God, for another day and all its opportunities." I hope so! To honor that gratefulness, why not set up a jar, bowl, or your official CWM blessing box in an obvious place and each morning drop a coin into that container with a prayer of gratitude. Then if you have an extra special blessing during the day, you can drop in another coin or coins as well. If your box becomes too heavy, trade out the coins for a paper dollar. I started this March 15 when Covid-19 began, and now have over \$7 with just one nickel or more per day. In March we will collect all our blessing box proceeds and donate to the Disciples Mission Fund. Let's honor how blessed we are each day. Sue Seward, Blessing Box Coordinator

#### AT A DISTANCE

By Rachel Hackenberg

*Then God said to Moses, "Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship at a distance. Moses alone shall come near the LORD; but the others shall not come near, and the people shall not come up with him."* - Exodus 24:1-2 (NRSV)

The covenant is signed, sealed, delivered. The laws are outlined. The holy days are marked for observance. It has been a long journey to this point, but finally the ancient Israelites can celebrate the arrival of a new post-Egypt community normal.

To commemorate the moment, God invites the elders to worship at a distance.

At a distance.

After all they've been through.

After all their struggles. All their laments. All their longings. After the miraculous highs - crossing the sea, gathering bread from heaven, following a blazing fire. After the horrid lows - searching for fresh water, battling with other tribes, leaving behind their buried dead. After all of it, God invites the people to worship at a distance.

You would think the shared trials and triumphs would produce intimacy between God and the people. But no. "Keep your worship over there, please. Don't come any closer."

Always at a distance.

To be sure, God socially distances for the people's own good - it's not like one just runs up and hugs God without expecting to be seriously burned by holiness - but the wisdom of distance doesn't erase the people's desire for nearness. And touch. And comfort. Not just a pillar of fire to watch but a small bit of flame to keep warm. Not just a cloud to follow but a hand to hold.

But God is clear: "Keep your distance."

So while Moses gets to go closer to God to receive instructions on a few carpentry projects, sewing assignments, and liturgical practices - seven chapters' worth of crafting details - the people's longing for God's nearness demonstrates itself in the (understandable) golden calf fiasco.

Prayer - God, I would melt all my jewelry into an idol if I thought it would bridge the distance between us. I would chase clouds forever if I just had a hand to hold. Don't leave me lonely, despite the distance.

FAITH HOPE

LOVE

GIVE BLOOD

**First Christian Church**

**Blood Drive**

**Sunday, August 30<sup>th</sup>**

**8:00 to 12:00**

**Complimentary Covid 19 antibody test with each donation**

**\*\*All donations remain local\*\***



All donors will receive a recognition item and a free cholesterol screening. Donors must be 16 or older, weigh at least 110 pounds, and show photo I.D. 16-year-olds require written parental permission.

**LIFESOUTH**  
Community Blood Centers