



THE JOURNEY WILL NOT BE PUBLISHED THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 24.

JOY- THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Living with Joy, Lee Boles

1 Peter 1:8: Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy;

This Christmas Season, instead of focusing on the busyness, the decorations, the food or the presents, choose to focus on JOY. The joy of knowing God sent His Son for our forgiveness. The joy of being with family and friends. The joy of worship and deep, abiding thankfulness. The joy of kindness to strangers.

Joy comes from knowing Christ, as a child and as our Savior. True joy cannot be contained but MUST be shared. Joy itself is a gift. Give it freely.

Prayer: *Dear Lord, Each day, fill my heart with joy that I may serve you. In your Son's name. Amen*

LOVE - FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Nina Senn

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever! Psalm 118:1

I clearly remember hearing about the love of God when I was a child and that it was good news to me. I was fortunate to be with teachers and classmates who continually helped me realize that we could choose to follow Jesus Christ, choose to show God's love to others.

I think of a father who chose to love his daughter through very difficult times, guiding her through to a strong faith in Christ. Love moved a friend of mine to forgive another, realizing the gifts their relationship had given them both. Each day we, too, can take care to find ways to be less self-absorbed and to respond to others with love.

Prayer: *Thank you, God, for your great gift of Jesus Christ, who calls us daily to love one another. Thank you for your church, where we are surrounded by people we love and people who love us and who help us grow ever more loving. Amen*

ADVENT MEDITATIONS CONTINUED FOLLOWING PAGE

Deadline for the *Journey* is **Thursday, December 27**, 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.

CHRISTMAS EVE DECEMBER 24, 2018

Monty Love

The meaning of the advent season has changed several times from the early church's interpretation. Currently, the first two weeks of Advent are usually about the 'anticipation' of Christ's second coming. The last two weeks are about celebrating Christ's first coming.

When I was a child, I was focused on myself. In the weeks before Christmas I spent my spare time going through the Sears catalog dreaming about all the wonderful toys that I might receive. In my family there were seven of us children, and we usually had one gift for Christmas. Oh, we went to church every week. My Father was a lay leader in the Methodist Church. I learned about God and Jesus and his disciples. I had knowledge but didn't understand. I never thought of my early years as being rich or wealthy. But I was.

When I married Dinah and we had children, my extended family initiated me into a world of abundance. At least that's what it looked like to me. I remember asking Dinah; "Is this what it looked like in your house on Christmas morning?" There were gifts everywhere! I was not used to so many gifts. We decorated the tree and the whole house! We had a huge meal with all the trimmings. How much is enough? How many gifts can we give each other? Now, don't get me wrong, I'm not trying to cast blame or shame on anyone. I liked the gifts as much as anyone did. It is just a reflection of my history, that's all.

As I have grown as a Christian, my experiences continually remind me of how rich I am. I have been to Africa and Appalachia and many places in between. I have witnessed great poverty and experienced great cruelty that men heap on each other. I am not just talking about the basic necessities of life. I am also talking about love and spirit and faith and hope. I have had times when I could see no joy or hope or faith or it was well hidden. Out of some of the greatest tragedies of my life, God has created great joy and love and hope and abundance. God has blessed me with a beautiful

Continued next column...

family and friends who love me as I love them. I am part of a loving, giving church community. The greatest commandments Jesus gave us were "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength'. The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:30-31). Wow, what a world that would be? Then the world would see Jesus Christ in our faces and in our hearts. We would share a great feast and celebration with the world.

Prayer: *Heavenly Father, we are blessed beyond measure. This Advent season we are most thankful for your son, Jesus Christ. We celebrate the gift you gave the world with Christ's birth, life and resurrection. We are anticipating his second coming with the hope and faith that we as Christians will all be reunited with our Savior. Father, help us to Love our neighbors as ourselves. Help us to remember that the gifts you have showered upon us carry a great responsibility to share with our neighbors, friends, church, nation and indeed the whole world. Father we are unworthy of your love and forgiveness. The gift of your son, Jesus Christ is the greatest gift of all. Help us to show the world that we are Christians and help us to let your light shine through us into the darkness. Help us to show the world that Christ is the answer. Amen*

CWM WELLHOUSE REPORT

Congratulations to Ann Thompson, Jackie Sameck, and Margaret J. Vann for winning a WellHouse bracelet in the raffle which netted \$375. Thanks to all who participated and to all others who donated beyond the raffle. Final report shows \$652.00 donated for this worthy regional project.



CHRISTMAS CARD POST OFFICE

It's back. The mail box for our Christmas card drop off is up and running. Remember to look for your cards each Sunday as **we do not mail any that are left after the season is over on January 6th.**

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23

Scripture Luke 1: 39-45
Sermon "Fulfilled by the Lord"

SERVING AT THE TABLE

8:15 Mark Stiles & Roger Sameck
10:30 Mike Lash & Dale Thomas

COMMUNION PREPARATION

Gayle Herber

SERVING COMMUNION

8:15 Donna Blair & Marilee Keim
Rick & Kay Shrout
10:30 Patti Allen & Abby Allen
Ruth Lackey & Bev Williamson
Mat Ball

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP

Chuck & Penny Jackman

SUNDAY'S FOOD BASKET is in honor of
Colleen C. & Thomas Jenkins birthdays.

CHILDREN WORSHIP & WONDER

*The Shepherds Show the Way to
Bethlehem*
Chuck Jackman, Jan Mackenzie,
Joe Allen & Tré Davis

YOUNG DISCIPLES

*John, Follower of Jesus, Teacher throughout
the World..* Heather Black, Ashley
Rogers, & Troy Davis

AV SUPPORT TEAM

Technical Director - Chuck Herber
Assistant Director - Michael Smith
Sound - Michael Smith &
Malcolm Landreth
Stream Operator - Michael Smith

CHURCH OFFICE HOLIDAY SCHEDULE
December 24, closes at 12:30 pm
December 25, closed.
December 31, closes at 12:30 pm
January 1, closed.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30

In the pulpit Rev. Linda Davis

SERVING AT THE TABLE

8:15 Mark Stiles & Roger Sameck
10:30 Mike Lash & Dale Thomas

COMMUNION PREPARATION

Gayle Herber

SERVING COMMUNION

8:15 Donna Blair & Delores Edgeton
Chuck & Penny Jackman
10:30 Patti Allen & Joe Allen
Marilee Keim & Troy Davis Jr.
Bev Williamson

COFFEE FELLOWSHIP

Dinah Love

SUNDAY'S FOOD BASKET is in honor of our wonderful
church volunteers!.

CHILDREN WORSHIP & WONDER

Christmas - Meeting the Christ Child
Janie Clasgens, Holly Ahlbin, Brianna Jackson,
& Jacob Black

YOUNG DISCIPLES

Meets second and fourth Sundays

AV SUPPORT TEAM

Technical Director - Chuck Herber
Assistant Director - Michael Smith
Sound - Michael Smith &
Malcolm Landreth
Stream Operator - Michael Smith

ATTENDANCE	12/9	12/16
First Service Worship	37	36
Sunday School	21	19
Second Service Worship	90	118
Young Disciples	NA	NA
Children's Church	4	NA
Total Worship	131	154

CHRISTMAS FEST THANK YOUS!

On Saturday, December 8, we had our Christmas Fest event and it was a tremendous success!! We estimate that approximately 150 children and families came and participated in this event! What an incredible blessing from God that we were able to welcome that many people from our community to our church event. Families received a brochure about our ministries and a flyer inviting them to all of our Advent activities. Thanks to a "Guess How Many Mint M&Ms Jar" at our entrance table, we received contact information from several of the participants and they will be hearing from us about our future events.

Children and families went together to various stations around the church. Families picked which stations they wanted to visit including several craft stations, the Christmas story, visit with Santa, Christmas caroling and food!

This event would not have been possible without all of the wonderful volunteers who stepped up and gave their time, talents, and treasures to this. A big thank you for those who donated food, decorated the areas, prepared the crafts, helped with the set-up, served the food, helped with clean up, greeted at the welcome table, led the craft stations, played Santa, helped with the Santa station, acted as storytellers for the Christmas story, played and led the Christmas singing, directed people to the stations, advertised the event, promoted the event, shared the event, invited people to the event, came to the event and prayed for the event!

We have a wonderful church and we serve an awesome God! My hope and prayer is the people who came to this event felt some of that same love and they will be made welcome when they return to see us in the near future.

Thanks be to God! ~Pastor Laura West



COMMUNITY BLOOD DRIVE at First Christian Church. **Sunday, January 6**, from 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

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VALHALLA CEMETERY LOTS

First Christian Church owns four cemetery lots in Valhalla Memory Gardens (698 Winchester Rd NE, Huntsville, AL 35811). These lots are available at market value, either in pairs or four total. We are offering these to our members and friends before advertising through various outlets. If you would like more information, please contact Lee Boles. Leeboles@aol.com for the Trustees

WEDNESDAY NIGHT MEALS

December 19 is our last Wednesday night meal of the year. We are taking the month of January off to evaluate our Wednesday night meal program and may resume in February when the days are a little longer. Keep an eye out for an update in mid to late January.

LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT GIFT?

Community Outreach is suggesting an opportunity for you to give the perfect gift that could be used anytime of the year for food, clothing, medicine, etc. A \$25 gift card from Walmart is perfect! The recipient of these cards will be a good mix of those in need – Grateful Life (less fortunate), CASA (aging and homebound), and DHR (single moms trying to make it).

Bring gift cards to the church office or write a check with "CO gift card" in the memo line and someone from the committee will purchase for you. Since these cards will not be distributed before Christmas, collection is the entire month of December.

IRS CREDIT FOR 2018 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 2018 giving must be **placed in the collection plate by Sunday, December 30, 2018** or received by the church office **before 12:30 pm on Monday, December 31, 2018** (that is when the office closes for New Year's Eve) or **postmarked by December 31, 2018** (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 2019 giving and not 2018 per IRS regulations.

YOUTHTOPIA REGISTRATION

Date: January 18th-20th. (Youth will meet at 1 pm on Friday, January 18, at First Christian Church)

Location: Camp Chandler, Wetumpka, AL

Cost: \$130.00 .

Applications are available outside of Pastor Linda's office and the deadline for applications is January 11th. Please submit application and payments to Pastor Linda.

Can't Make It To Church? Stream it live at:
www.twitch.tv/fcchsv

CONDOLENCES to the family of Jack Montgomery, who passed on Sunday, December 7.

I would like to thank everyone who participated in our Hanging of the Greens service on December 2nd. The sanctuary looks beautiful and I have received many compliments on the service itself. In this time of year when we are preparing for Christmas it is wonderful to have such a service to prepare ourselves. The readers, the choir, the helpers, the children, the youth, the parents, and those who helped in the back during rehearsal and on Sunday are all much appreciated. We would also like to thank those who helped to prepare our Advent Devotional Book this year. Each of the articles are well written and very meaningful. Thank you for taking the time to reflect on this season.

Rev. Paul Allen

NURSERY HELP NEEDED

Share an hour or more of your time with our babies or toddlers once a month. Sign up poster is in the Commons for first service, Sunday School, or second service. If you are not on the Safe Church volunteer list, we can easily provide training. Call Pastor Laura, 256-881-0150, if you have any questions.



JANUARY 2019

Birthdays	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Marie Cloyd & Emily Black 3 Danny Hutson & Elaine French 6 Joyce Skinner 9 Cathy Rosol 10 Carolyn Browning & Dayna McGee			1 New Year's Day Church Office Closed	2 No Wednesday Night Groups 9 am Emmaus 6 pm Phoebe Circle	3 9:30 am DISCIPLES Study 5 pm Convener Meeting	4	5
11 Dick Christiansen, Gayle Herber, & Courtney Volinski Olsen 12 Anne Condit Vann 20 Jeff Sewart 21 Louise May, Shawna Stiles, Doris Kennemer, & Laura West	6 Epiphany 8:30 - 12:30 Blood Drive 3 pm Pickelball	7 10 am Quilters	8 5:30 pm Elders' Meeting	9 9 am Emmaus 6 pm Men's Bible Study • Kids & Youth Bible Study • Women's Bible Study 7 pm Chancel Choir	10 9:30 am DISCIPLES Study 10 am Elizabeth Circle 6 pm Board Meeting	11	12
22 Ed Rice 23 Hayley Beckman 24 Lee McCombs 29 Gradson Goodson, Daniel Rogers, & Malcolm Landreth	13 9:15 am Kids Info Mtg 11:30 am Youth Info Mtg 3 pm Pickelball	14 9:30 am Esther Circle 10 am Quilters 5:30 pm Christian Ed	15	16 9 am Emmaus 6 pm Men's Bible Study • Kids & Youth Bible Study • Women's Bible Study 7 pm Chancel Choir • Community Outreach	17 9:30 am DISCIPLES Study	18 Youthtopia	19 Youthtopia
31 Peggy Arnston, Jordan Green, Alex Kahalley	20 Youthtopia 3 pm Pickelball	21 Martin Luther King Jr. Day Church Office Closed 10 am Quilters	22	23 9 am Emmaus 6 pm Men's Bible Study • Kids & Youth Bible Study • Women's Bible Study 7 pm Chancel Choir	24 9:30 am DISCIPLES Study	25	26 Youth Bowling
	27 11:30 Mission Family 3 Lunch 3 pm Pickelball	28 10 am Quilters	29	30 9 am Emmaus 6 pm Men's Bible Study • Kids & Youth Bible Study • Women's Bible Study 7 pm Chancel Choir	31 9:30 am DISCIPLES Study		