



The Journey

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GOD IS OUR REFUGE

Like most of you, on Wednesday January 6th I was glued to the television for most of the afternoon and evening. I could not believe what I was seeing, the images were unreal. Never in my lifetime did I expect the Capital building to be invaded in such a manner, to see our elected officials, their staff, and others cowering behind seats waiting for rescue. The anger, frustration, and contempt in the eyes and voices of the protestors turned insurrectionists was apparent. As I watched all of this with my wife and children, I had to wonder about the future and what it would bring for our country and its citizens.

The simple truth is that this event was not spontaneous. It is the result of politics and policies that have been building for decades. So often the worst is associated with those who disagree with us. We have come to the point where it difficult to see the humanity in someone who has different views. Our politics only allow for one sided thinking, and anyone who diverges is not only wrong, but evil.

I was always taught that our nation was built on compromise, how to work together for the common good. To many this idea is reviled. We hold onto our beliefs so deeply that any kind of compromise seems to be a betrayal of our values. However, we live in a nation that is incredibly diverse. That diversity can be a strength and it can be a weakness if we allow it to be. It takes compassion empathy, the ability to identify with another person's need and desires, to look beyond our differences and work for the good of all people.

We as Disciples of Christ know this very well. We belong to a denomination that holds no creeds or dogma. Our confession of faith is that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God and our savior. Our founders believed that everything else was subject to study, debate, and reflection. Yes, this meant compromise if congregations were to survive. Your idea of God might me different than mine, but we can still worship, study and commune together and we have continued to do this for generations.

It is time for us, as Christians, to bring this idea back to our nation and the world. We can no longer be silent in the face of partisanship and injustice. We cannot allow our elected leaders to continue to debate while those in need languish and suffer. We have to make a better way, and we need to be the better way. Our voices should be heard loud and clear. This cannot be allowed to happen again.

Truly this is a time for national mourning but it can also be a new day and an opportunity for reconciliation. Let us remember that we are not alone in our sorrow and confusion for God is with us now and forever. The earth may change, our nation may change, people may change, but our God is always there. Therefore, let us turn our hearts to God, so that our anger, fear, disbelief, and sorrow can be transformed into the resolve to work in the world and make it better. As Psalm 46: 1-3 reads,

¹*God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.*

²*Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
through the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;*

³*though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.*

Let the voice of God be heard through the land bring comfort and peace, mercy and justice. Amen.

Deadline for the *Journey* is **Thursday, January 14** at Noon. Email to: publisher@fcc-hsv.org

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

GIVING STATEMENTS

If you want to receive your 2020 Giving Statement please contact the church office either by phone or email. We can send your statement by email or mail, just indicate how you want to receive it.

Thank you for your generosity,
FCC Office, 256-881-0150 office@fcc-hsv.org

JANUARY SERVICE PROJECT FOR CWM

January has traditionally been blanket month for CWM service activity. Once again, CWM is partnering with Church World Service in their Blankets+ program. We are the “+” in the blanket project. FCC in Huntsville, Alabama, can make a difference all around the world as the need arises. \$10 can provide a warm blanket for anyone left homeless by an earthquake or other natural disaster. Please consider a monetary donation to FCC with CWM “Blankets” in the memo line. Margaret J. Vann

REMINDER FROM THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

During the month of January, the nominating committee requests that you give prayerful consideration to suggestions for leaders to serve First Christian Church during the program year July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2023. It is the effort of this committee to put forth a strong slate of leaders to guide our congregation forward. Please contact any member of the committee including Holly Ahlbin, Karen Ball, Beverly Cannon, Jim Daniel, Cameron Douglas, Ann Thompson, and Nancy Waites with suggestions and/or questions.



CONGRATULATIONS to Matthew L.

Brown who recently graduated with a degree in Political Science from American University in Washington, D.C.

The 2021 sign up chart for **FOOD BASKETS** is available. You may email the office at publisher@fcc-hsv.org or call 256-881-0150 to select a Sunday to remember or honor a friend, loved one, anniversary, birthday, or other special occasion. Donations are \$25.00 with checks made out to First Christian Church and Food Basket on the notation line.



WEEKLY PRAYER CONCERNS



Not Published Online

CONDOLENCES to

REGIONAL PRAYER REQUESTS

First Christian Church, Anniston, 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 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**

ESSENTIAL by Martha Spong

Jacob was afraid, and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." - Genesis 28:17 (NRSV)

We woke up Sunday morning, a roomful of adults who had slept on the floor of a martial arts studio during a rigorous spiritual retreat, and saw a near-blizzard out the windows. We were supposed to drive half an hour to coastal Fort Williams Park, where we would meet the retreat leader, who had gone home to sleep in his own bed. Even in Maine, had it been a weekday, non-essential workers would have been warned to stay home.

The retreat leader exerted a powerful influence on the group, however, even from his house (which was, I might add, close to the park). Although I began to wonder why I had signed up for this, for the rest of the group the pilgrimage to meet him felt essential. I had volunteered to drive, which still felt like a marginally better choice than trusting someone else, and I delivered the group safely just as the snow stopped falling.

Each of us had brought a symbol of something we were ready to leave behind. Find a place near the water, our leader said, and throw it into the ocean.

The group dispersed, and I walked through the snow to the small, rocky beach. At the edge of the water, I considered the wedding ring in my coat pocket. My divorce was new and strange; I was looking for new connections, but I didn't like these people very much.

A sound of crackling took my attention, and I looked down. Tiny stones, disturbed by the icy tide, sang a winter song, ancient and essential. God was with me, even when I did not know it.

Prayer

Holy One, for crackling rocks at the gate of heaven, we praise you. Amen.

ONLINE WORSHIP SERVICES

Due to the surge in COVID-19 cases, we have temporarily returned to virtual/online services on several online platforms.

Stream live at 9:30 am on Sundays (or watch previous services anytime) on YouTube at: www.youtube.com/channel/UCzQCRY8Vfa-IDhugUnUhCKw

You may also stream services live on Sundays at 9:30 am, watch previous services, videos for children, and special activities on our Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/fcchsv/videos

Finally, stream services at 9:30 am on Sunday at: www.twitch.tv/fcchsv

