



OUR LENTEN JOURNEY

The forty days of Lent (actually there are forty-six days, but the six Sundays are not counted) are a time for spiritual growth through repentance, fellowship, prayer, and concentration upon our baptismal covenant. In penitence and contrition we bring before God the brokenness and sin in our lives and ask for God's forgiveness and healing. In doing so, the church engages in a common process of remembrance and renewal.

Many of us have heard the tradition of giving something up for Lent like caffeine, desserts, or meat. This small concession is supposed to remind us of the sacrifice of Jesus by surrendering something that we enjoy. Yet, I believe that Lent should be a time when we begin spiritual practices and seek out ways to care for the needs of others. We can read a portion of the scriptures every day and use a commentary to discover the deeper implications of the passage, begin a practice of prayer or contemplation, give our time and money to a local charity, attend one of our weekly bible studies, or seek out worship experiences that help us confess our wrongdoing and ask for forgiveness.

This year First Christian Church of Huntsville will be holding an Ash Wednesday service on February 14th at 6:00 pm. On Ash Wednesday we confront our own mortality and confess our sins before God within the community of faith. The form of the service focuses on the dual themes of sin and death in the light of God's redeeming love in Jesus Christ. Ashes are used as a sign of mortality and repentance and the Imposition of Ashes, placing ashes on our foreheads or hands, can be a powerful way of participating in the call to repentance and reconciliation.

You will also notice changes in our Sanctuary beginning on February 18th, the first Sunday of Lent. The communion table will have a traditional black pall, which is a cloth laid over a casket in funeral services, draped over it in remembrance of Christ's death, the cross and candles will be removed until Good Friday, and the tone of the worship services will be more subdued and contemplative. While every Sunday is a celebration of the Easter promise and the joy located within, during Lent we are preparing ourselves for the crucifixion, for it is only in Christ's sacrifice that we can find forgiveness, repentance and new life.

I hope that those of you who are able will attend these services so that as a community we can worship together, ask for forgiveness, and look forward to the celebration of Easter. May God bless you through the season of Lent, Amen.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING.

There will be a Congregational Meeting on Sunday, February 11, following the Worship Service to vote on the approval of Rev. Alyssa Burton as Associate Minister for Children, Youth, and Families. There may also be a vote on an Interim Senior Minister pending recommendation by the Church Board at the meeting.

The *Journey* is published on the first and third Monday of the month.

The **deadline** for *Journey* submissions is **9:00 a.m. Thursday, February 15**. Email to: publisher@fcc-hsv.org

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**LONG TERM
PRAYER CONCERNS**



ALLEN FAMILY SEND OFF CELEBRATION

Help FCC Celebrate the Allen Family with a Send Off Luncheon, February 25th after church service. A sign up for bringing food is available at www.signupgenius.com/go/4090D4FA4AE2AA20-47611337-allen# Please bring food to the Family Services area beginning at 8:30am.



**Community Free
Dental Clinic**

Serving Madison County Adults In Need

Community Outreach and Christian Women's Ministries

are seeking donations, during the month of February, for the Community Free Dental Clinic. Their funding comes from individuals, local businesses, grants and churches. The mission is accomplished with the help of licensed volunteer dentists and fourth year dental students from UAB. The typical patient has broken, painful teeth. Life threatening infections possibly happen without much needed extractions. Emergency dental care is not available in local Emergency Rooms. Please consider supporting this clinic which exists to serve those most vulnerable in our community.

SOUP AND CHILI COOKOFF

The Soup and Chili cookoff will be held on **February 18th** following the worship service in McMains. Sign up to bring your favorite soup or chili and come and vote (\$1 per vote) for your favorite! Proceeds will help expand our youth mini-missions and sponsor youth activities as needed. For more information or questions contact Alyssa.

NEW BIBLE STUDY



A women's Bible Study will start on February 22 at 10:00 a.m. in the church parlor. This six week study will be from the Book of James and is entitled: **Thrive - Living Faithfully in Difficult Times**, by Jennifer Cowart. If

you are interested, please contact Lisa Fitzgerald at [redacted] for more information and to place a book order.

Long term prayer concerns are published once a month in the *Journey*. **Please** keep the church office informed of the status of individuals you put on the list.

REGIONAL PRAYER REQUESTS

South Baldwin, Foley, AL
Fair Hope Christian Church, Fair Hope, AL



THIS WEEK'S FOOD BASKET is given in memory of Tom Woodall by Nancy Woodall,

Community Outreach (CO) is asking for regular donations of hygiene products such as: sanitary pads, tampons, and/or period underwear (period-proof underwear is a relatively new period product that looks and feels like regular underwear.). The donations will support girls at three schools - Huntsville Junior High School, McNair School, Morris School- who do not have funds to purchase these products. A donation site is located in the church Narthex. Please consider helping with this needed project.

Margaret J. Vann



The Rummage Sale is quickly approaching! We are excited to announce that the **Rummage sale will be March 2nd from 6am-**

12pm. We will begin taking donations at 11:30am on February 25th in McMains and Family Services. We will need help organizing and pricing items and would appreciate donations of snacks for our volunteers. Sign up sheets for this will be located in the Narthex or email Alyssa.



Our next home, #29, will start in March. Last year Habitat completed six homes and plans to start six more this Spring. Our home will be one of those. Watch for more information in the next Journey and posted on our Bulletin Board in the hallway outside of the Parlor. All volunteers must attend a Habitat safety program which will be scheduled at the church soon. This is a requirement of Habitat's insurance program.

Thanks, Bob Senn, Mr. Habitat for FCC



The 2024 sign up chart for **FOOD BASKETS** is available. You may call the office at 256-881-0150 or email publisher@fcc-hsv.org to select a Sunday to remember or honor a friend, loved one, anniversary, birthday, or other special occasion. Donations are \$25.00 and go to Community Outreach. Make checks payable to First Christian Church and Food Basket on the notation line. You may also make your payment through PayPal and designate Food Basket on our website at fcc-hsv.org/who-we-are/how-to-give and click on the Donate button.

ATTENDANCE

Jan. 21: Worship Service: 69
Small Groups (During week & Sunday): 6
Jan. 28: Worship Service: 87
Small Groups (During week & Sunday): 69
Feb. 4: Worship Service: 90
Small Groups (During week & Sunday): 83



GIFTS TO LIVE ON

*Jesus looked up and saw rich people putting their **gifts** into the treasury; he also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins.*

*He said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them, for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had **to live on.**"*

~ Luke 21:1-4, (NRSV)

As the relief, refugee, and development mission fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), *Week of Compassion* works with partners to alleviate suffering throughout the world.

As one example, after "America's deadliest wildfire in more than a century" rushed along the mountains of Maui, Week of Compassion was there to help. Partnering with Children's Disaster Services, a team of volunteers offered a compassionate response and care focused on children as parents navigated the first days of reaction and recovery. The impacts on communities will be significant and ongoing. Disciples' Week of Compassion continues to engage a network of ecumenical partners and local organizations to make the greatest impact with human and financial resources, in ways that best serve the needs of the affected communities.

In the gifts we bring, others find what they need. In the act of giving, the impact carries beyond the giver. Blessed by God's mercy and multiplied by God's grace, these are truly **GIFTS TO LIVE ON.**

On February 18 and 25, we join Disciples churches across the US and Canada to collect a special offering for *Week of Compassion*, supporting the vision of a world where God's people transform suffering into hope. You can note "Week of Compassion" for any amount, whatever your preferred method of donating to Huntsville First Christian Church.

Please give generously.

NEW ALABAMA - NORTHWEST FLORIDA REGIONAL MINISTER

The Regional Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Alabama - Northwest Florida has called Reverend Kerry Kesey to serve as the next Regional Minister. The historic decision was made with a unanimous vote of the Board during a called meeting on January 11, 2024. Rev. Kesey is the first woman called to serve as ALNWFL Regional Minister and will begin her ministry on April 1, 2024.

Rev. Kesey is currently the minister at First Christian Church Fayette, Missouri, having previously served congregations in Kentucky, Kansas, Washington, Oregon, and Hawaii.

The Search Committee is grateful for all the prayers, feedback, and support from those in the Region. The search process included anti-racism and bias training, consultation from independent evaluators and Regional Ministry Search partners, feedback from within the Region, and an unwavering commitment to follow God's lead every step of the way. Members of the Regional Search Committee included: Clarissa Harms (chair), Giovanni Amar, Rev. Mark Benson, Joe Cunningham, Stuart Price, Kaitlin Richardson, Patricia Jones (moderator-elect), and Rev. Robin Blakemore (moderator).



Rev. Kerry Kesey grew up in Oregon and NW Arkansas. She graduated from Northwest Christian College (now Bushnell University) in Eugene, OR with a BS in Church, Society and Family. She received her Master of Divinity from Lexington Theological Seminary and went on to serve churches in Kansas, Washington and Hawaii, and most recently Missouri. Kerry's daughter, Annie, graduated from Brite Divinity School and now pastors in Seattle. Kerry's son, Micah, teaches High School U.S. History and has an 11 year old daughter, Sophia. Kerry is engaged to Joe Grill a former PGA Golf professional who now works remotely in the data management field.

Rev. Kesey grew up in the Southern Baptist Church, going to church with her grandmother. Kerry discovered the Disciples in college and has been in ministry for 25 years. Rev. Kesey has a deep love for the Church in its many manifestations, and especially for the Christian Church (DoC). The diversity

of the Disciples gives witness to the unity of the Church found in Christ. Kerry also deeply appreciates the Church's polity which provides for mutual accountability and the freedom for congregations to express faithfulness in many ways.

Kerry loves getting to know people and hearing their stories of life and faith. Her varied experiences and background enable her to relate well to people of all ages. With a heart for serving God and one another, one of Kerry's guiding scriptures is "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind. The second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself," (Mt. 22:37-40). Kerry is excited about serving God alongside this Region and partnering together to bring "wholeness to a fragmented world."

Some of Kerry's joys in life are reading, traveling, kayaking, and music, and of course her granddaughter. She will gladly show you pictures.