



The Journey

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“DEAR DISCIPLES” by Rev. Terri Hord Owens

Hello, Disciples. A year ago, we heard the words "global pandemic" from our world public health officials and our lives and the world literally changed forever.

A year ago, we were pivoting from worship in our beloved physical spaces to learning how to worship together in digital space. A year ago, those of you who work in front line, essential jobs such as nurses and first responders had to strap on protective gear to ensure that you would be safe as you cared for the sick and the dying.

Many of us had to leave our homes to go to work to provide essential services or we had jobs that weren't conducive to working at home - you, too, put your bodies and your lives on the line so that we would have what we needed to live.

So many have lost loved ones over the past year. Over 530,000 lost to COVID alone in the United States, and over 22,000 lost to COVID in Canada. We've struggled to mourn without the community rituals that give us comfort.

Many of us have also lost loved ones to reasons other than COVID. Some have been infected by the virus, and so many of you have recovered. Thank God!

Some have lost jobs, homes, and savings. We have been on lockdown and in quarantine, too many of us without human interaction, living in social isolation for far too long.

We have learned that the Lord's Supper can be holy with hot chocolate and graham crackers. Because as long as we can remember Jesus' broken body and shed blood, those elements are holy.

We've learned to safely serve our communities, caring for those who have gone without during the pandemic, to make sure people can eat and have shelter. We are grateful to see the distribution of vaccines but we want to see that those vaccines are distributed with equity.

And while we know we are not out of this wilderness moment just yet, as we continue on our Lenten journey, let us embrace this time that we have for prayerful and scriptural reflection. Time that allows us to commune with God.

In these moments, may you be reminded in the midst of these unprecedented times, as Paul famously preached, in Acts 17, "The God who made the world and everything in it, the God who is lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands." Nor is God served by human beings as though he needed anything. Since God God's self gives to all mortals life, breath and all things. From one ancestor, God made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and God allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they live so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for God and find God, although, indeed, God is not far from each one of us.

Disciples, this year we had hoped to gather physically for General Assembly 2021, and we had claimed a theme text, Romans 8:38-39. God knew we would need this text, and I leave it with you now.

Disciples continued next page...

Deadline for the *Journey* is **Thursday, March 18**, at Noon. Email to: publisher@fcc-hsv.org

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

...*Disciples* continued.

“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels or rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, nothing in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our lord.”

God is with us, Disciples. God is all around. And so as you continue on your Lenten journey, take time to be still. Take time to think and meditate on that sacred text, the Word of God. Allow God's Spirit and God's Word to infuse your very being, and strengthen your soul.

Remember that God loves you so very much, and so do I.

Rev. Terri Hord Owens

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER

One of CWM's service projects for March is the Healthy Families program at the National Children's Advocacy Center. Healthy Families is a parent support program for first-time parents living in Madison County. It offers family support and education services that begin in the last trimester of the pregnancy or before the baby is 1 month old and may continue until the child begins kindergarten.

Please consider a monetary donation to this program, marking your check 'NCAC Healthy Families' in the memo line and dropping in the offering bowl at church or mailing to the church office.

Thank you! Mary Ann Anderson

IN PERSON & ONLINE WORSHIP SERVICES

We have resumed in-person worship services but you may still stream them live at 9:30 am on Sundays (or watch previous services anytime) on YouTube at: www.youtube.com/channel/UCzQCRY8Vfa-IDhuqUnUhCKw

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/fchsv/videos

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



WEEKLY PRAYER CONCERNS



Not Published Online

We are temporarily publishing, as space allows, the prayer concerns that are normally 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 to leave a message.

Please notify the Pastors or the church office if you are going to the hospital and would like to be contacted

REGIONAL PRAYER REQUESTS

Iglesia Cristiana
Oxford, AL



Imagine what God can do:

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb.

~ John 20:1

The Easter Offering reaches deep and wide with the limitless power of the risen Christ.

- developing Disciples
- forming new faith communities
- connecting with ministry partners around the world
- serving God's people in need

On March 28 and April 4, we join Disciples churches across the US and Canada to collect an *Easter Offering* to provide support for general ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). You can note "Easter Offering" for any amount, whatever your preferred method of donating to Huntsville First Christian Church.

Imagine what God can do when we share our gifts.

SEEKING DONATIONS FOR HOME # 27

We completed Home # 26 last year during the pandemic. We did not work many hours on the house but did contribute \$4,000 to its construction cost. Eight partner families moved into their new homes during the pandemic. Their experiences and how they live their lives have changed dramatically since moving. Their children can run and play outdoors after a long day inside because they now live in a safe neighborhood with adequate space for learning and working from their home. The knowledge that their home was built to code and standards promotes an environment of health and safety. We are making a difference. This new Habitat neighborhood will have 31 homes when completed.

We are changing lives one home at a time. Please help us with time, talent or treasure on Home # 27. Write your check to FCC with Habitat on the memo line if you would like to contribute.

Bob Senn, Mr. Habitat for FCC

CWM BLESSING BOXES DUE

Ladies, the money you have collected for the Blessing Box ministry is due in March. You can contribute whatever you wish as you count your blessings from this past year even if you did not keep a special blessing box. This money is contributed to the Disciples Mission Fund with half of the donations going directly to the International Disciples Women's Ministries. Your giving makes a significant difference in the mission of the church at home and abroad. Please make your donation at your March Circle meeting or in your FCC offering noting Blessing Box in the memo line.

Blessing Box Dedication Prayer:

Dear God, giver of everything, use these gifts which we present. May they show forth your love and our faith in ways beyond our thoughts, sight, and imagination. Make us one as we go forth in your service. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

Sue Alexander,
East Side Christian Church,
Longview, Texas

CHURCH CALENDAR - MARCH

The following are the known* church related activities.

24 9 am Breakfast Bunch

25 10 am Bible Study - The Walk

28 9:30 am Palm Sunday Service- Easter Egg
"hunt" following service (details TBA)

April

1 10 am Bible Study - The Walk

7 pm Maundy Thursday

4 9:30 am Easter Service

5 10:30 am Quilters

* Previously, activities were listed on the calendar based on Facility Requests submissions. Some meetings are now being conducted virtually, or in other ways, so the church office has no way of knowing that those meetings are occurring. Please contact the church office (256-881-0150 or publisher@fcc-hsv.org) if you would like your group or committee, including the point of contact, included on the calendar.

FIXERS AND ELIXIRS by Molly Baskette

Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily. Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me.

- Psalm 31:2 (NRSV)

It can feel nearly impossible to talk with someone you love when they are in pain and resist offering solutions. When our best friend or sibling is suffering from a bad breakup, an intractable work relationship, a futile financial situation, we automatically go into solving mode. We become fixers, and offer elixirs, certain we know just the therapist, strategy, book, or pharmaceutical to make it all come right, or at least numb it for a while.

But almost no advice is good enough (particularly to a person too upset to hear it) to replace the simple efficacy of deeply listening. Anne Lamott wrote, "If someone listens, deeply, you can lay [your pain] at the feet of the right god."

Deep listening has benefits for the listener, too. Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, "The one who can no longer listen to his brother will soon no longer be listening to God either; he will be doing nothing but prattle in the presence of God as well."

Needing to fix other people's problems is about making ourselves more comfortable. It is about ego and not soul. The soul was born knowing how to listen.

The psalmist asks God to listen - just listen. What if the listening itself is the rescue, the rock, the refuge, the fortress? Knowing that God really hears and doesn't need to blame, shame, fix or forget is all the balm the patient needs.

Next time you are in pain and your friend starts to fix or offer patent medicine, it's OK to gently stop them and say: "Please, can you just listen and not offer solutions? That's all I really need."

And the next time you are listening to someone in pain, check yourself: are you trying to fix or elix? Trust that quietly listening with your whole self really is enough.

Prayer - God, thanks for listening and not talking back. Amen.

Sanctuary Service Protocols

- In person worship is at 9:30 a.m.
- Sunday school classes, the nursery, children/youth gatherings, coffee, and other hospitality services are currently suspended.
- While FCC and the State recommendations are good benchmarks, we invite all people to worship with us based on their comfort level. Virtual services are offered (facebook.com/fcchsv, twitch.tv/fcchsv, or First Christian Church Huntsville on Youtube) every Sunday.
- **Attendees, including children, will wear face coverings/masks inside the church and practice social distancing (6 feet apart for non-household members) for everyone's safety.**
- Attendance is limited (approximately 75) to the ability to social distance and the service will be broadcast (107.9) to the parking lot in the event of overflow attendance.
- Enter the church through the Bell Tower Garden/Narthex doors. The doors by the church office will be locked.
- Greeters will provide hand sanitizer to all who enter and provide masks for those who have not brought their own.
- Ushers will seat people down the center/side aisles
- No choir/congregational singing.
- Following the service, rows will **leave by the side aisles** with the east aisle exiting through Family Services and the west aisle through the Narthex doors. (There will be directional signs.)
- Offerings may be placed in the brass plate when exiting the sanctuary or sent by mail.
- Please, **no congregating indoors** before or after service - social distancing outdoors.
- **Anyone with any symptoms will remain home and celebrate virtually for at least 14 days.**
- **Notify the church office immediately if you develop symptoms after attending a service.**