



WHERE THE JOURNEY LEADS

It is nice to get away from home for a while, take a vacation, and enjoy different sights and sounds. This past week Patti, Joe, and I were able to take a break, travel first to Auburn to see Abby and then to a campground close to Destin, Florida to play on the beach, fish, eat some wonderful seafood, and take time to rest. It was also Patti's birthday that week, so we had another wonderful reason to celebrate.

Vacations can be relaxing but it is just as nice to return home to what makes us comfortable. Sometimes our journeys cause us to make changes in our lives by giving us a different understanding of the world or a new focus and this allows us to rethink old beliefs and ideas and create a new self-image. But often, our travels serve as a reminder of how fortunate we truly are, that we are blessed to live in a place that provides warmth, fellowship, and love.

I think that it is necessary to get away from the usual from time to time and explore new possibilities, but I also believe that comfort and joy can be found in the traditional, and when we combine the strengths of both we will find that our lives are renewed. This is what is so exciting about any journey, the possibility that we will have a life-changing experience.

First Christian Church of Huntsville, Alabama has continued its spiritual journey for 75 years. Throughout this time there have been changes in membership, structure, leadership, and worship, but the mission of the church has remained the same, to equip the saints in the work of ministry and share the Good News of Jesus Christ with the world.

We should be proud of the heritage of First Christian Church, but we must also continue to look forward to the future and another 75 years of fellowship, service, and worship. There will be many changes throughout this time as well, but through the power of God, our church will continue to grow in Spirit and it will fulfill its mission. If you are interested in becoming a part of the committee that will plan our celebration in the fall feel free to contact the church office. Come and experience our joy and become a part of our mission as we continue our journey following in the footsteps of God. Amen.



Join us Easter Sunday at 9:30 am as the FCC Chancel Choir presents the Easter cantata *Beautiful Christ* by Heather Sorenson. The choir will be joined by guest musicians David and Rebecca Caine, Katerina Fedoseyev (piano), Kevin Lay (cello) and Olivia Palazollo (violin). We look forward to seeing you on Easter Sunday as we celebrate the Risen Christ!

Peace,
Lauren Wilson Carter, Director of Music

Deadline for the *Journey* is **Thursday, March 31**, at Noon. Email to: publisher@fcc-hsv.org

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

TIME TO COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

Ladies, a year ago in March you were encouraged to keep a blessing box to hold coins for each ordinary and extraordinary blessing you received. It is now time to count those blessings and send that blessed total to FCC marked Blessing Box offering/CWM. If you did not keep a coin box, you can still reflect back on this past year and donate whatever thanksgiving amount you determine is appropriate. You can turn in your funds to your circle as well. Then start your blessing boxes again! Be sure to turn in these funds by your May circle meeting so they can be submitted to the Disciples Mission Fund.

Sue Seward, Blessing Box Coordinator

CHURCH CALENDAR

- Mar. 28 10:30 am Quilters
6 pm *Disciples History Class*
- Mar. 30 6 pm Men's Group
7 pm Choir Rehearsal
- Mar. 31 10 am *John, Gospel of Light & Life*
- April 10 **Palm Sunday**
10:30 am Egg Hunt
11:45 Community Outreach Meeting
- April 11 9:30 am Esther Circle
10:30 am Quilters
5 pm Conveners' Meeting
6 pm *Disciples History Class*
- April 12 6 pm Elders' Meeting
- April 13 6 pm Men's Group
7 pm Choir Rehearsal
- April 14 10 am *John, Gospel of Light & Life*
7 pm **Maundy Thursday Service**
- April 17 **Easter Sunday**
- April 18 10:30 am Quilters
6 pm *Disciples History Class*
- April 20 6 pm Men's Group
7 pm Choir Rehearsal
- April 21 10 am *John, Gospel of Light & Life*
6 pm Board Meeting



SHORT TERM 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

Primera Iglesia Cristiana Hispana
Ft. Walton Beach, FL



THIS WEEK'S FOOD BASKET is in memory of Leanne David Davis, father of Troy Davis.

MARCH 27 ATTENDANCE

Worship Service: 103
Small Groups: 18





**LONG TERM
PRAYER CONCERNS**



Not Published Online

TIME TO CELEBRATE A NEW CHAPTER

WHO: Janie Clasgens & Brandon Rutherford

WHAT: Wedding Shower

WHEN: April 24, 2022, 2:00 PM

WHERE: Church Parlor

Their beautiful story and registry for the couple is available at ***

. All are welcome to enjoy the festivities

DESPERATELY POOR CHILDREN NEED OUR HELP

Christian Women's Ministries (CWM) hopes you will join us as we financially support House of Hope Haiti and the Pringle House of Jamaica during April. Through Global Ministries, House of Hope provides a safe place and educational programs for at-risk children in the Port-au-Prince area with a completion rate of 95%. Haiti has been in political turmoil for years and has also been devastated by several hurricanes. Life expectancy average is 63 years and adult illiteracy is over 51%. We will also be donating to the Pringle Home of Jamaica, which provides the same services for the impoverished children there. We can make a difference in the lives of children in two very poor third world countries by donating to support these causes. Checks can be made to FCC with "CWM April project" in the memo line. The need is great; please join CWM in changing lives.

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 lists.

IN PERSON & ONLINE WORSHIP SERVICES

We offer in-person worship services Sunday mornings at 9:30 or you may also stream them live at 9:30, or watch pervious services anytime, on [facebook.com/fcchsv](https://www.facebook.com/fcchsv), [twitch.tv/fcchsv](https://www.twitch.tv/fcchsv), or [Youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com).

HELP WANTED

Early Childhood Ministries is seeking a Kitchen Manager/Cook to start on May 31. Hours are 8:00 am - 2:00 pm Monday - Friday. Experience in a commercial kitchen is needed. Contact susan@fcc-hsv.org for additional information.



The 2022 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 through our website fcc-hsv.org/who-we-are/how-to-give/

HELP THE CHURCH WHEN YOU SHOP AT AMAZON

Click the link below, click on Start Shopping, and sign in to your Amazon account as usual. FCC will automatically be credited with 0.5% of your purchases at no additional cost to you and no deductions from the donated amount to FCC.

Shop at AmazonSmile
and Amazon will make a donation to:
First Christian Church

Get started



TELOS by Kaji Douša

“I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. Be perfect, therefore, as your Abba in heaven is perfect.

- Matthew 5:44 & 48 adapted (NRSV)

“You had me at hello.”

It’s one of the most iconic scenes of [cis-het] romantic cinema. She says, “You had me at hello,” after he soliloquizes, “You complete me.”

What a lovely phrase to utter.

So many of us walk around with this feeling that we are incomplete. That we have this emptiness that only the right other person can fill. That if we could just find that person—or find someone and turn them into this person—we can fill that void. But another person will never make us complete. In a lasting way, anyway. So what does?

First: a good Greek word. *Telos*. It’s a goal, an aim. An ideological end. And in this passage, the *telos*, the goal, the end, is:

Completion.

Here, Jesus gives you the end. And he always gives some ways to get there. I start at the end of the passage: Jesus said, “Be perfect, as your Abba in heaven is perfect.” And perfect is just a troublesome translation of the Greek, which is...

Teleios.

Must we pray for our enemies? Must we love them? Jesus sees the void. He’s listened to the prayers. He knows about the hatred, the enmity. And he wants to offer a path to completion.

Love is the end. It is the means. It is where we begin and where we end. Love is the Alpha and the Omega. God. Is. Love.

So there’s your *telos*. There’s your goal. Your end. You call God into your conflicts. Your emptiness. Your anger and your resentments.

And with God as the ends, you have the means.

Prayer

God, make the path to my end clear in my sight. Amen.



ARE WE IN CHURCH OR IN CHRIST?

Rev. Paul J. Allen IV

Sermon: Mar. 20, 2022

Scripture Verses:

2nd Corinthians 5: 16-21

Growing up as a preacher’s kid, one of the realities of my parents’ job was that he had to move a lot. This meant that I had to change schools often, find new friends, and figure out where I fit in. This was difficult at first, but as I become used to our moves I found they became an opportunity for a new start. Yet, I always had a way of getting my foot stuck in my mouth early or doing something that would embarrass me.

With each new beginning, I would learn from the past but found new and exciting ways to make a fool out of myself. I learned that a new beginning doesn’t matter if you are still the same person. We can pretend to be anyone we want, but eventually the real you will come out.

That led me to start thinking about who I was? What were the things that I valued? How did I want other people to see me? How did I want God to see me? These are questions that still ask as I realize that I am constantly growing and changing. Who am I, and who am I becoming?

This passage comes from Paul’s second letter to the group of Christians who were living in the city of Corinth in Italy. It is important to note that Paul is rather frustrated with the members of the Corinthian church. The two letters he wrote to them deal with conflicts that were tearing the church apart.

In the congregation at Corinth, there were factions and frictions, conflicts and confrontations. There were conflicts about worship, what women should wear in the church, whether they could eat food sacrificed to pagan idols, whether or not they should speak in tongues, about sex, and whether Paul was a true apostle. By any stretch of the imagination, this was not a healthy church. But, Paul’s primary message was that the Corinthians were to be reconciled to God and to each other even amid these conflicts.

Paul wrote, “So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; everything old has passed away;

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see, everything has become new.” Being made new is a theme that Paul returns to in his letters time and time again. When a person has been made new in Christ, a different ethic controls their life, the ethic of love. When this happens Paul believes that we become the goodness of God in human form.

Dr. Edward F. Marquart writes that when a person is “made new in Christ,” there are three “no longer” that can be found. Paul says that when a person is in Christ, no longer do we live for ourselves but for Christ and others.

No longer do we regard other people from a merely human point of view. We do not see them as wealthy or poor, black or white, different or same. Human characteristics pass away and are replaced by the simple understanding that we are all children of God. We are special, we are unique, we are chosen, we are gifted in different ways, we are all a part of the Body of Christ.

When a person is in Christ, we no longer emphasize the sins of others. We do not say to ourselves, “Am I glad to hear about so and so and what they did. Secretly their sin makes me feel better.” When a person is in Jesus Christ, we cannot take pleasure in the faults of others.

When you are in Christ, these former things pass away, and you become a new person. You have been transformed, even though your personality has not necessarily changed. When a person is in Christ, they are entrusted with God’s message of reconciliation. We become God’s ambassadors on earth, we are the messengers of God appointed to spread the good news. God appeals to others through people like you and me.

So amid this conflict and turmoil Paul tells the Corinthians that they are new people, reconciled with God and with each other. More so, they are messengers, the ambassadors of God to the world, those who are chosen by God to continue the work of Christ.

However, there is more to this idea of being an ambassador. At this time in history, Roman

provinces were governed either by the Roman Senate or Caesar. When a province was peaceful and serene, the Senate ruled. But when a province was filled with conflict it was governed by a personal representative of Caesar, that representative was called an “ambassador.” Ambassadors were Caesar’s voice and held his power in the provinces they governed.

Paul told the Corinthian Christians that they were more than representatives of God, they actually become the righteousness of God. This means that Christians are called to be ambassadors of peace, hope, and justice in times of conflict and fear. We are to speak the truth in love, forgive others, exemplify the new life we have been given, and let the light of Christ shine in our lives so it can shine in others.

Paul was holding the Corinthians to rather high standards in light of their situation, and in truth, we are still held to that standard. For Paul, being a Christian meant more than saying a few words, being baptized, and then going to church. Paul believed that Christianity was a way of life, a way of being in the world.

People should not have to ask if you are a Christian, they should know it. They should see it in your actions, your words, the way you carry yourself, and the way you treat other people. Paul gives us the ultimate honor and the ultimate responsibility, to become a part of the Body of Christ, one of the ways that people experience God.

If you want to live a faithful life there is no escaping this responsibility. Of course, sometimes we represent Christ better than others, Paul certainly understood human frailty and the fact that we will often fail. However, he also knew that success or failure does not depend upon us. We are God’s creations and God will use us, flaws and all, to complete the process of reconciliation. Often, all we need to do is get out of the way.

As Rev. Dick Hamn writes, we have to start asking the important questions of faith rather than claiming we have all the answers. If some-

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one says they have all the answers you are either in the presence of a deity or you should be very skeptical.

Of course we do not have all the answers, but we do know some of the right questions. Who is Jesus to you? What does it mean to be “in” Christ? How can we be better Christians? Today, the question may be: What does it mean for you to be an ambassador for Jesus Christ in Huntsville, Alabama?

Or maybe we simply need to ask ourselves why we are in church today? Interestingly, the scriptures never speak about the importance of being “in Church.” The primary religious experience is always to be in Christ.

There are all kinds of people who are “in Church” that are self-centered, impressed with worldly things, and delight in the sins of others. When you are in Christ you see the world and the people in it differently. The power of life is found in being in Christ, not “in the church,” and we have to understand the difference.

When a person is in Christ, they are a new person. When we are in Christ working together we can become a faithful, growing church, that demonstrates true community, deep Christian spirituality, and a passion for justice, but only if we remove our preconceptions of what the church and we should be, and listen to what God calls us to be. The church can be a powerful instrument of faith but only if it is God’s church not our vision of what the church should be.

This means that we have to see the world differently. We have to see the people around us differently. They are no longer a means to an end they are ends themselves, loved, accepted, and chosen by our gracious Creator. Together we can be the Body of Christ, we can be God’s church, and we can do wonderful things in the world, but only if we stop thinking we have all the answers and reconcile with God and with one another. Amen.

COVID-19 CHURCH PROTOCOLS (Approved by the Board on March 10, 2022)

- **One in-person 9:30 a.m. service** is currently offered. Virtual services (facebook.com/fcchsv, twitch.tv/fcchsv, or First Christian Church Huntsville on YouTube) are also offered every Sunday. While FCC and State recommendations are good benchmarks, we invite all people to worship with us based on their comfort level.
- **Enter the church through the Bell Tower Garden/Narthex doors.** The doors by the church office are locked.
- **Wearing face coverings/masks is optional**
- Hand sanitizer and masks are available at the Lobby Welcome Table along with prepackaged communion elements.
- The **nursery** is open for the 9:30 a.m. service and the 10:30 a.m. small group time.
- **The front section of the Sanctuary, on the pulpit side, is the least impacted area with our heating and cooling system and every other row of pews is roped off to allow individuals to practice social distancing so that they may worship at their level of comfort.**
- Offerings may be placed in the brass plate when exiting the sanctuary or sent by mail.
- **Small groups** (including Sunday school classes) will meet at **8:30 a.m. or 10:30 a.m.**
- Anyone with any symptoms will remain home and celebrate virtually for at least 14 days
- **Please notify the church office immediately if you develop symptoms after attending a service.**

