



### SPIRITUAL GIFTS

In the New Testament, Spiritual Gifts are talents given to the members of the church for its service. They are diverse and can be anything from administration to wisdom, preaching to interpretation. What is different about Spiritual Gifts is that they are given by the Holy Spirit. They are gifts of God and are to be used for God's purposes. Hebrews 2: 4 states..."And God added his testimony by signs and wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, distributed according to his will." The members of the early church believed that each person had a role in the congregation, but none were elevated because of their gifts. All Spiritual Gifts were to be used to spread the message of Jesus Christ and further the work of God in the world. If these gifts were not used in this manner they were seen as corrupted.

In 1 Corinthians 12: 8-10 the Apostle Paul gives a list of Spiritual Gifts. Paul's list included wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, and interpretation of tongues. Paul reminds us that we must not use these gifts, no matter how wonderful they may be, for our own sake. They are not to build ourselves up, rather they are to be used humbly for the good of the Body of Christ. As Paul continues to write about Spiritual gifts prayer, service, administration, and discernment were added. In 1 Corinthians Paul says that there are a variety of gifts, varieties of services, and varieties of working but the same Lord who activates all of them in everyone. Each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

While all Spiritual gifts are valid they are not always used correctly. Paul saw instances where Spiritual Gifts were misused so he provided a model for how these gifts are to be used in the Church. His model is the "more excellent way" of love, the undeserved grace bestowed on humankind, and the reality that we can share this grace with others. Paul believed that God's love was so great, so powerful, that we could not contain it. Love, the ultimate spiritual gift, must be shared with others, and this idea became the basis of our faith.

In Paul's age who would have thought that Spiritual Gifts would include working with websites, social media, sound systems, business models, stewardship campaigns, long-range planning, and others. Some gifts look very familiar, but Spiritual Gifts constantly grow and change, as does how they can be used to build up the church, the community, and the world.

As members of the church, we are called to recognize our Spiritual Gifts and then use them to build up our congregation and our community. What are your Spiritual Gifts and how is God calling you to use them? Amen.

#### 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 previous services anytime, on [facebook.com/fcchsv](https://www.facebook.com/fcchsv), [twitch.tv/fcchsv](https://www.twitch.tv/fcchsv), or [youtube.com/channel/UCzQCRY8Vfa-IDhuqUnUhCKw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzQCRY8Vfa-IDhuqUnUhCKw)

Deadline for the *Journey* is **Thursday, April 21**, at Noon. Email to: [publisher@fcc-hsv.org](mailto:publisher@fcc-hsv.org)

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



## SHORT TERM PRAYER CONCERNS



You are cordially invited to celebrate the happiness of McKenzie Williams at her bridal shower hosted by Mission Family 2 on Sunday afternoon, May 22, 2 - 4 pm, in the FCC Parlor. McKenzie and her fiancé Justin Foscue are registered at Lawren's, Pottery Barn, and other sites on [www.theknot.com/foreverfoscue/registry](http://www.theknot.com/foreverfoscue/registry). You can read their romantic story on that site as well.

## Not Published Online

### CHURCH CALENDAR

- April 25 10:30 am Quilters  
6 pm *Disciples History Class*
- April 27 7 pm Choir Rehearsal
- April 28 Christian Education Meeting
- May 1 **4 pm All Church Dinner**
- May 2 10:30 am Quilters
- May 4 12 pm Phoebe Circle  
7 pm Choir Rehearsal
- May 8 11:45 am Community Outreach
- May 9 11 am Esther Circle  
10:30 am Quilters  
5 pm Conveners' Meeting
- May 10 10 am ECM Spring Sing/Art Show  
6 pm Elders' Meeting
- May 11 7 pm Choir Rehearsal
- May 12 6 pm Board Meeting
- May 16 10 am Quilters  
5:30 pm ECM Board Meeting
- May 18 7 pm Choir Rehearsal
- May 22 2 pm Williams/Foscue Shower

**CONDOLENCES** to the family of Kathryn Shrou, mother of Rick Shrou & Kathy Pearce, who passed on April 21.

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](mailto: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**  
Harrison Street Christian Church, Greenville, AL

**THIS WEEK'S FOOD BASKET** is in honor of Karen Ball's birthday by Matt & Stan Ball.



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](mailto: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/](http://fcc-hsv.org/who-we-are/how-to-give/)





MAY  
BIRTHDAYS



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*Grateful Life Community Church*

**GRATEFUL LIFE COMMUNITY CHURCH SUPPORT**

Christian Women's Ministries is asking for financial support for Grateful Life Community Church during May. This church, our sister Disciples congregation in Huntsville, serves the disadvantaged and homeless members of our community. If you would like to contribute, please write your check to FCC with Grateful Life in the memo line and mail it to FCC.

Thank you.

**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).

**HALLELUJAH IS FOREVER BY** Vince Amlin

God's anger is but for a moment; God's favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes in the morning.

Psalm 30:5 (NRSV with inclusive language)

The other day, my wife made her famous apple pie. Only it wasn't. She took the recipe from a different place, thinking it was the usual. When the pie came out, she knew something wasn't right. The apples had overcooked. The crust wasn't flaky. It tasted like nothing.

The next week she tried again and discovered her mistake. The two recipes were nearly identical. The difference was just 1/4 cup of flour and 1/12 cup of shortening. But from our first bites of the second pie, we knew: Yes! That's the way it's supposed to be.

Baking is a delicate balance. So is faith.

Easter, like Lent, is supposed to be a season. Fifty days stretching to Pentecost. Seven weeks of celebration, resurrection, and joy. It's called Eastertide. Don't feel bad if you didn't know. No one does.

Many of us observe 40 days of solemn introspection at Lent. We give things up. We take things on. We remember we are dust. We bury our hallelujahs.

Then, for one glorious morning, it's lilies and trumpets and candy-filled plastic eggs; 40 parts Lent to 1 part Easter.

That's the wrong recipe. The original calls for 50x as much! Fifty times as many rolled away stones! Fifty times as many empty tombs! Fifty times as much death-defeating love!

Imagine the difference. In your life. In your church. In our world.

The balance is off. It's time to switch recipes. Welcome to Eastertide.

**Prayer** - Joyful God, death-defeating Love: your anger is for a moment, your favor is for a lifetime. Death has had its day, joy has come. Hallelujah!



## FAITH AND DOUBT

Rev. Paul J. Allen IV      Sermon: April 24, 2022

Scripture Verses:              John 20: 19-31

Today is the second Sunday of the celebration of Easter. Often we forget that the season of Easter lasts until Pentecost, which is on June 5 this year. Yet, we should have known. The great joy we feel when we hear the news that Christ has risen, cannot be contained in one day. So we are called to continue the celebration. The wonder and exaltation Easter brings extends until our whole life is filled with the good news of Jesus Christ.

In the scripture lesson for today we hear about the disciples and their varied reactions to Christ. We also hear about the disciple Thomas and his doubt.

Thomas was given many names in the Scriptures. He was called the son of thunder, Didymus, Greek for the twin, Judas Thomas, the Just, one of Jesus' closest apostles, yet after this event he became known as doubting Thomas.

Of course the disciple Thomas would not recognize this title if he heard it today. According to church tradition, after his experience with the resurrected Christ Thomas went on to proclaim the gospel with great fervor. The tales of the apostles inform us that Thomas spread the message of the gospel as far as India and was martyred for his faith. There are still Christians in India that trace their religious lineage back to Thomas.

In those days he was not known as doubting Thomas. That name was only given to him after his death when the author of the gospel of John wrote about Jesus' first resurrection appearance.

Because of this name, we tend to disregard or diminish the work of Thomas because of his doubt. We cannot imagine why he would not believe his friends and fellow apostles. They had an experience with Christ; they saw him. Why did Thomas need special proof, why did he have to see Christ face to face and be able to touch his wounds to believe?

We seem to forget that the other disciples needed this same proof to believe that Christ had risen. In the gospel of John Peter and the disciple Jesus loved had seen the empty tomb, the beloved disciple even knew that something wondrous had happened; yet neither disciple understood what it meant. They returned to the other apostles telling no stories and proclaiming no good news.

Mary Magdalene saw the risen Christ, he had called her by name and she was filled with great joy. She ran to the other disciples and told them of her wonderful experience and how did the disciples react to this news?

They locked themselves in a room, for fear of the Jewish authorities. Does this sound like the actions of a group of people who understood Jesus' resurrection? Does this sound like those who believed without seeing?

Of course not. The disciples reacted as they always did, with doubt, fear, and self-interest. It was not until Jesus appeared to them face to face, showing them the wounds in his flesh, that they recognized his resurrection.

But even then seeing Jesus was not enough. They were still afraid when they saw his resurrected form. Perhaps they thought he was a ghost, like they did in the gospel of Luke, or perhaps they thought he was an imposter. Jesus had to tell them to be at peace two times so they would listen to his words. After this event, after the disciples were empowered, we finally hear about Thomas. He was not around when Jesus appeared the first time. He had not seen the risen Christ face to face like the other disciples, so he does not believe. Like the other disciples, he believed when he saw Christ standing in front of him, but he is still reviled for his doubt.

We vilify Thomas for not trusting the disciples, but we do not question their judgment when they do not listen to Mary Magdalene or when they do not believe their own eyes the first time they see Christ. Jesus is not just talking to Thomas when he blesses those who believe without seeing; he is

*Faith* continued page 5...

...**Faith** continued from page 4.  
talking to the other disciples, and in reality, he is talking to us, as well.

We have so much evidence of a loving God in our lives, so many exhibitions of the power and glory of God in the world, that sometimes it boggles the imagination when we do not trust in the existence of God. We find fault in Thomas' lack of faith, but do not think about our lack of faith or lack of action.

There is a reason why this story is told in the gospel of John. There is a reason why this sticks in our minds, why we hear it every year, and why we look down on Thomas. It is because we see a part of ourselves in Thomas and we do not know what to do with this.

Frederick Buechner once wrote, "I don't know of any story in the Bible that is easier to imagine ourselves into than this one from John's Gospel because it is a story about trying to believe in Jesus in a world that is as full of shadows and ambiguities and longings and doubts and glimmers of holiness as the room where the story takes place is and as you and I are inside ourselves."

We do not want to face the fact that sometimes we doubt, especially in the face of hard questions. When we are at our lowest, when life's burdens seem too much, we doubt. But God knows our doubts and our fears. Jesus blesses those who believe and do not see, but he does not curse the disciples because of their lack of faith.

There are times when we all encounter spiritual doubt. The Old Testament is filled with the prayers of those who do not trust that God is with them or even disagree with the actions of God. They want to know where God is in their pain. When Israel is besieged by enemies, they want to know why God did not stop them. Some prophets even argue with God claiming that Yahweh did not act justly.

We doubt because we are human, but when that doubting becomes disbelief when we throw away our long-standing faith in Christ because we

can no longer feel his presence, that is when our doubt becomes sinful and dangerous.

Our faith is what drives us forward, our love binds us closer together with Christ and each other, and our hope helps us live day by day awaiting the time when we shall see Christ face to face. Without these three pillars of Christianity, we are truly lost and alone.

I love the story Father Henri Nouwen once shared about an experience that helped him deal with faith and doubt. Nouwen was a fan of the Flying Rodleights, who were German trapeze artists. Nouwen greatly admired these acrobats and the family befriended him and even let him practice with them on the trapeze.

Once, Nouwen recalls, he asked the leader of the troop about flying through the air and he said, "As a flyer, I must have complete trust in my catcher. The public might think that I am the great star of the trapeze, but the real star is Joe, my catcher. He has to be there for me with split-second precision and grab me out of the air...I have simply to stretch out my arms and hands and wait for him to catch me...The worst thing the flyer can do is to try to catch the catcher. A flyer must fly, and a catcher must catch, and the flyer must trust, with outstretched arms that his catcher will be there for him."

Don't we live like the flyer on the trapeze? We are spinning and swirling through life, unable to see where we are headed. We can't see, touch, or prove the existence of a catcher who won't let us fall. Nevertheless, we learn to reach out our hands and believe that we will be safely caught and held when the time is right. Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have come to believe, because sometimes reaching out in faith, unseeingly, is the only way open to us.

We know that times of doubt will come, yet our faith, hope, love, and the unbounding joy we feel in the knowledge of the risen Christ, will see us through these tough times, if we break through the walls of despair and trust in God.

Thanks be to God, Amen.

**EASTER GREETINGS FROM GMP**  
**REV. TERRI HORD OWENS APRIL 17, 2022**

Hello Disciples, alleluia Christ is Risen! This is the day the Lord has made and we will rejoice and be glad in it! The apostle Paul teaches us that if it weren't for the resurrection our faith is in vain. Without the resurrection, there is no gospel so let us proclaim it not just today on Easter resurrection Sunday but let's celebrate the risen Lord each and every Sunday, each and every day. Every day is a day of thanksgiving. Every day is a day to celebrate the joy and the hope that we have in Jesus the Risen Christ! May God fill your hearts and minds with peace, love, hope, and joy on this most holy day on the Christian calendar. Remember that God loves you and so do I. Alleluia, Christ is Risen.



**ATTENDANCE**

April 25 Worship Service: 77  
Small Groups (During week & Sunday): 16  
(Maundy Thursday: 37)

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

- **An in-person worship service is available at 9:30.** 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.**