



## COMMUNITY IS THE KEY

One of the things I have missed during the pandemic is going to the local movie theatre to see a film. I have been a movie buff since I was a child. My father used to take me to a movie every couple of weeks and my family continued that tradition until recently. Going to the movies has been an American pastime for more than a century. From storefront theaters, the lavish movie palaces of the 1920s, drive-in theaters and multiplexes, movies have compelled Americans with their stories and become an icon of culture.

While the movie industry remains strong, the theater industry is in turmoil. The increasing quality and affordability of high-definition TVs, coupled with the convenience of streaming services, have made it challenging for movie theaters to thrive. Then movie theaters all over the country were forced to shut down for months due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some theaters are still closed, and those reopening are operating at reduced capacity. It remains to be seen whether Americans will return to theaters given the taste they have acquired for films released directly to streaming services.

For decades, movie theaters have struggled and church attendance has declined. While the two are not directly connected, both are receiving the same message: we need to innovate or fade away. The purpose of worship is not entertainment; however, movies and worship are both communal experiences. They center on stories that have the power to change us, and they are enriched by in-person participation with others. With this in mind, what can churches learn from the movie theater industry?

During the pandemic, many churches streamed their worship services, allowing people to join without leaving their homes. Streaming also allows worship services to transcend geographical boundaries. Beyond the pandemic, livestreaming and digital ministry have a lot of potential. They enable those who cannot leave their homes, or are working during services, to worship with their church when they cannot be physically present, but like streaming movies, the experience of online worship is often lacking.

The movie theater industry has taught us that while gimmicks and atmosphere may get people in the door, they will not keep them there. When people return to churches, they will seek community above all else. They have seen worship online; what they need is in-person connection through the experience of worshipping side by side with others who profess the same faith. This experience is irreplaceable. In worship, community is as essential to the experience as the stories we tell. Churches must offer worship that is meaningful, relevant, and connects with people of all ages and abilities on their level.

As November approaches we are looking forward to returning to worship in our sanctuary. While we know that some members cannot join us, for health and other reasons, we do hope that those who can will come back and celebrate with us. We plan to do so safely, following state, national, and regional guidelines, but with a strong emphasis on community, building a worship service that may be different because of the pandemic, but is still meaningful, powerful and affirming. While the church never closed, it did change, and it will continue to change through the years ahead. However, one thing will always remain the same, we are the Body of Christ, disciples following in the footsteps of Jesus, and the church will remain as long as we gather and worship.

Thanks be to God, Amen.

Deadline for the *Journey* is **Thursday, September 24**, 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.**



## October Birthdays



## WEEKLY PRAYER CONCERNS



Not Listed Online

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**CONDOLENCES** to the family of Frank Palumbo, grandfather of Holly Ahlbin, who recently passed.

**CONDOLENCES** to the family of Clarence E. "Pete" Peterson, former member, who passed on September 9.

**REGIONAL PRAYER REQUEST**  
Madison Christian Church  
Madison, 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](mailto: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**

Christian Women's Ministries service project for September is Hope Place. Hope Place is an agency of Crisis Services of North Alabama that provides emergency shelter, counseling, court advocacy, etc. for victims of domestic violence and their children. Please join our Circle members in supporting this worthy cause during September. You may include your donation with your church offering by noting "Hope Place" and the amount.  
Thank you, Nancy Woodall



**THIS WEEK'S FOOD BASKET** .is in honor of Kathryn ShROUT and Bob & Betty Marshall by Rick & Kay ShROUT

**WE ARE NOT IN CONTROL** By Steve Martin

I know we are all struggling with the harsh realities of our world. No one could have predicted the wide-spreading effects of the COVID-19 virus. Every facet of our lives has been touched and we frequently cry out, "When this is over...."

Unfortunately, it may not be over. I have heard several experts in epidemiology who are predicting that, even with the hoped-for vaccine, the virus will still be present. They are suggesting we need to begin to think about living with its presence in everyday life. That sounds like a tall order.

Perhaps you have thought about how life is different for you because of the presence of COVID-19. I have been in on a few conversations and I think it is helpful. Many of us recognize that the priorities of our life are more clearly seen. At our home, we are eating better and pay more attention to foods which are more beneficial to us. We eat far less fast food, and we have experimented with foods which we otherwise would not have included in our diet.

My heart aches for those who are suffering in this time. While reports of COVID-19 in our congregations are relatively few, I can only imagine the anxiety and struggle which victims of the virus experience. I also hurt for our schools – for students, parents and teachers. Adjustments to the typical school day are numerous and these are cause for a great deal of anxiety and pressure for all involved. For me, asking a 5-year old to spend four hours in front of a computer screen and calling it Kindergarten simply feels wrong!

Congregations have made many adaptations, and these are filling a need. In the region, we have learned to rely on Zoom for meetings and other ways to connect with people, and these too are working. The canceling of our 2020 camp program has been the source of great disappointment. Just as schools have learned to adapt, the camp program will do the same! Next year there will be camps. We are working on a schedule and are planning to keep camps much smaller than in the past.

I am sure you have your own list of regrets in

the face of our chaotic world. No matter what our list looks like, and no matter how much we would love to see the virus stricken from our world, we learn again the age-old truth, "we are not in control." This remains God's world, and our response is to be faithful in our work to bring God's love and peace into each situation.

Amen.

**JOIN US FOR THE 9:00 AM SUNDAY  
DRIVE-IN/TAILGATE WORSHIP SERVICE**

You are invited to come in your vehicle as a family unit and you can stay in your car or you can bring chairs to sit in your parking space. **The service is broadcast on FM 107.9** (limited to the parking lot area) so you may tune into the service on the radio in your vehicle. There is also a public address system for those sitting outside their vehicles. We ask that you maintain social distancing and that if you leave your car you will wear a mask. **Please bring your own communion elements.** They will be blessed and we will partake together.

Drive in service attendance:  
September 20: 49

**Upcoming Scriptures & Sermon Titles**

<b>Sunday, September 27</b>	
<b>Scripture</b>	John 15:1-17 Mark 4:35-41
<b>Sermon</b>	"Still Connected"
<b>Sunday, October 4</b>	
<b>Scripture</b>	Psalms 19 Matthew 21: 33-46
<b>Sermon</b>	"The New Tenants"
<b>Sunday, October 11</b>	
<b>Scripture</b>	Philippians 4: 1-9 Matthew 22: 1-14
<b>Sermon</b>	"Accepting the Invitation"
<b>Sunday, October 18</b>	
<b>Scripture</b>	1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 Matthew 22: 15-22
<b>Sermon</b>	"Examples of Faith"

## FCC ONLINE

If you use Facebook, be sure to click Like and Follow (when you click on Follow, select See First) to keep up-to-date with church activities. [www.facebook.com/fcchsv/](http://www.facebook.com/fcchsv/)

You may view previous sermons and other church videos on Youtube at: [www.youtube.com/channel/UCzQCRY8Vfa-IDhuqUnUhCKw](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzQCRY8Vfa-IDhuqUnUhCKw) (if you have a Youtube account, click on Subscibe and the Bell icon to get notifications when a new video is posted) or on Facebook at: [www.facebook.com/pg/fcchsv/videos/](http://www.facebook.com/pg/fcchsv/videos/) (see Facebook Like and Follow directions above.)

## RECONCILIATION MINISTRY OFFERING 2020, SEPTEMBER 27TH & OCTOBER 4TH

Recent events have reignited the conversation about human brokenness evidenced in the sin of racism and perpetuated in our institutional structures and systems. The *Reconciliation Ministry* of the Disciples of Christ is transforming lives and strengthening Christ's witness in the world showing that we love one another, even as Christ continues to love us!

Knowing how to love one another isn't always easy. We all have much to learn, together. The *Reconciliation Ministry* supports that learning and action. (Learn more at [reconciliationministry.org](http://reconciliationministry.org).)

"To show up is more than a selfie at a protest, or a social media post... showing up means to cry with me, and to let the pain of my people's tears move you to fight WITH those of us who are pushed to the sides because of the color of our skin, the thickness of our accents, or the documents we hold." --  
*Yesenia Caldwell, lay leader Iglesia Hermandad, Indianapolis, IN*

Within Alabama-Northwest Florida region, our regional *Anti-Racism* team trains our ministers, leaders, and other interested groups, produces videos and study materials, and consults with congregations and membership to encourage "true community" among congregations that seek to work against racism and toward reconciliation. **We will have a special video Reconciliation study on Zoom beginning Wednesday, September 30th, 6:00pm led by Rev. Paul Allen. Please contact Pastor Paul for details for the link and how to logon Zoom.**

On September 27th and October 4th, we join Disciples of Christ churches across the US and Canada to collect a special offering for *Reconciliation Ministry* to promote healing, relationship, and restoration in the whole family of God. One-half (50%) of the *Reconciliation Ministry Offering* is returned to our region; the other 50%

supports pro-reconciliation, anti-racism activities through the general church. You can note Reconciliation through any of our ways of donating that you are contributing to this special offering.

Please give generously.

