



LOVING STEWARDSHIP

One of the most dreaded topics discussed in any church setting is stewardship. This simple word causes us to squirm in our seats and look for the exits, but why does this term make us uncomfortable? Why does this idea continually challenge our faith?

Perhaps it is because when we discuss stewardship we are truly talking about giving of ourselves. In our society we do not like to give up power, our precious time, and certainly our money; therefore, when we are challenged by the gospel to share all three and focus our lives upon God, our hands begin to shake, and sweat collects on our brow. To many, stewardship feels like a trap, another way to lose what we have worked for, yet true stewardship, giving your whole self over to God, allows us to set aside our fears, join together in acts of service, and find the peace of mind that we are all looking for.

One of my colleagues, Rev. Aaron B. McNair, once preached on 1 Corinthians chapter 13, or the love chapter. He informed his congregation that we might have mighty gifts from God, we might have all knowledge and faith to remove mountains, but without love, we gain nothing. We might give away all our possessions and hand over our bodies, but if we do not have love we gain nothing. This is the true nature of stewardship. When we give of our time, talents, possessions, and our self, we must do so because we love others and we love God. Otherwise, we are truly nothing.

In the next few weeks, there will be many opportunities to give of your time, talents, possessions, and self to serve your congregation. Soon we will be having a stewardship campaign and seeking your input for our budget next year. We are also looking for volunteers to help us with our Trunk or Treat Parade, the Audio Visual team, and we will need helpers for our Advent and Christmas celebrations.

However, if you are looking for more to do in your community, we are always looking for people to help our Outreach Ministries. We could use volunteers for the Salvation Army mobile food truck, you can bring items for our local food pantries or offer to take that food to Helping Hands or our other local food banks, or you could agree to help with our next Habitat for Humanity build. We are always looking for volunteers and there are many options. By sharing your time, talent, and resources your impact on the community will only be outweighed by the joy you experience in your heart.

Grace and peace be to you, 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, October 14**, at Noon. Email to: publisher@fcc-hsv.org

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

AV VOLUNTEERS

The Audio Visual team is looking for volunteers to help with the Sunday service. Since we are now live streaming, recording and using slides during our services this takes more assistance. We need volunteers to help with the slides and with the camera. No skills are necessary as training will be provided. We are asking for volunteers to be available one Sunday a month. If you are interested please contact the church office at office@fcc-hsv.org or 256-881-0150).



SHORT TERM PRAYER CONCERNS



Not Published Online

CHURCH CALENDAR

- Oct. 11 9:30 am Esther Circle
10:30 am Quilters
5 pm Conveners' Meeting
- Oct. 12 6 pm Elders' Meeting
- Oct. 13 6 pm Men's Group
7 pm Choir Rehearsal
- Oct. 14 10 am Women's Bible Study
- Oct. 18 10:30 am Quilters
- Oct. 20 6 pm Men's Group
7 pm Choir Rehearsal
- Oct. 21 10 am Women's Bible Study
- Oct. 24 5 - 6 pm Trunk or Treat
5:30 & 6:15 pm Movie:
*It's the Great Pumpkin
Charlie Brown*
- Oct. 25 10:30 am Quilters
- Oct. 27 6 pm Men's Group
7 pm Choir Rehearsal
- Oct. 28 10 am Women's Bible Study
- Oct. 25 10:30 am Quilters
- Oct. 27 6 pm Men's Group
7 pm Choir Rehearsal
- Oct. 28 10 am Women's Bible Study



CONDOLENCES to the family of Laura Wilson Stiles, stepmother of Mark Stiles, who recently passed.

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



THIS WEEK'S FOOD BASKET is in memory of Bob Abernathy by Tom & Annelle Craig

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE SUNDAY, OCTOBER 10

Service: 72
Small Groups: 24

REGIONAL PRAYER REQUESTS

Grace Christian Church
Helena, AL

GIVING STATEMENTS AVAILABLE

Third Quarter Giving Statements are available in the Narthex on Sunday and in the Church Office during the week. If you are not comfortable coming to the church in-person, call or email the office (256-881-0150 or office@fcc-hsv.org) and we will email you a copy of your statement. Questions? Call 256-881-0150.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH IN OCTOBER

Our sister Disciples of Christ church in Huntsville, Grateful Life Community Church, provides ministry, food, clothing, tent housing, blankets, reading glasses, bikes, over-the-counter medicines, and toiletries to those within our community who have little in the way of material goods. Also, at this time, Grateful Life's van needs repair. In October, please give generously your monetary donations that may be used for these purposes. Make your check to FCC with 'Grateful Life' in the memo line.

Thank you,
Carrie German Love

SUPPORT THE CWM OCTOBER PROJECT

The Christian Women's Ministry's community project for October is support for the Neaves-Davis Center for Children. The Neaves-Davis Center houses juvenile court intake and probation services, detention services, community service programs, and the community placement and supervision program. Additional programs for detained juveniles include food services, medical services, recreational services, and library services. Religious services and activities are also provided, partially funded through community religious groups and civic organizations.

Please join CWM in supporting this worthy service. You may include your donation with your church offering by noting "Neaves-Davis Center" and the amount.

Thank you,
Janet Sholes

SENIOR ADULT RETREAT

November 4 - 5, 2021

The Senior Adult Cabinet is planning for its annual Senior Adult Retreat on November 4-5, 2021, at Rolling Hills Retreat Center in Calera, Alabama. The theme of the retreat is "**Celebrate Life!**" and the keynoters will be **Rev. Dale and Mrs. Mercedes Braxton**. All who consider themselves to be senior adults in the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region are encouraged to be a part of this retreat.

The Rolling Hills Retreat Center offers a lodge with motel-type rooms (with sheets, towels, pillows) and an adjacent meeting space where all meals will be served. The retreat begins just prior to lunch on Thursday, November 4, and will conclude by 1:30 p.m. on Friday, November 5. You may download a flyer and registration form [HERE](#) and you may also register on-line [HERE](#).

SHARING THE JOY

Mission Family 3 invites you to join us in a unique celebration of the engagement of Stan Ball and Audrey Eckart. Many of you will recall watching Stan grow while being in our midst with his Mom and Dad, Karen and Matt. Please take time to learn more of Stan and Audrey's story on the website below. Even though we will not have the opportunity to celebrate in person, as a church family we are sending love and congratulations to the couple with anticipation of their wedding October 29, 2021. Checkout their website below as "Their story" is very special. www.theknot.com/us/audrey-eckart-and-stan-ball-oct-2021



LIKE THOSE WHO DREAM

Talitha Arnold

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy. - Psalm 126:1-2 (NRSV)

In 2005, the southwestern United States was in the tenth year of a devastating drought. The pinon trees that covered the hills throughout northern New Mexico were among the casualties of the dry times. Stressed by drought and susceptible to bark beetles, they died by the thousands. Once green landscapes turned brown and grey with dead trees. For longtime residents, it felt like a death in the family.

But that August, it started to rain. Within days, fields of wildflowers sprang up. We couldn't believe our eyes. Yellow Cowpen daisies, purple asters, and rare flowers not seen in a century covered the land. Scientists observed that it wasn't only the rain that produced the riot of color. The needles of the dead pinons had provided the mulch and nutrients needed by long-dormant seeds. The trees would never be restored, but their death gave birth to a new beauty as far as the eye could see.

"May those who sow with tears, reap with shouts of joy," proclaimed the composer of Psalm 126. "Those who go out weeping shall come home with shouts of joy." The psalmist reminded the people of God's power to call forth new life - and joy - in even the driest and deadest of times. The psalmist also called them, and us, to be "like those who dream": to trust God's possibilities, whether the dream be a return from exile or acres of Cowpen daisies and purple asters.

Prayer

God of power and possibility, give us the courage to be like those who dream. Amen.



FOR GOD, ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE

Rev. Paul J. Allen IV

Sermon Sept. 10, 2021

Scripture Verses:

Mark 10: 17-31

What have we sacrificed to become followers of Christ? What have we given up to be his disciples? We are told in the scriptures that we need to give of ourselves to be faithful, but in all honesty, this is not a comfortable idea. We live in a land of great prosperity, but most of us are not saving, we are spending, borrowing from banks, or using credit cards to pay the bills. We tend to have an optimistic mindset, surely something good is just around the corner, but what if this does not happen?

Often, we want to hold on to those things that make us comfortable, be they possessions, beliefs, or opinions and when they are challenged we do not react well, becoming angry and searching for others to blame.

That is why the scripture passage for today is hard to hear. Surrender is a foreign concept because it means we have to part with a piece of ourselves. True sacrifice comes from giving up what is meaningful, the things that rule our lives, or that we think, validate our being.

But that is why this passage is so important for us to hear. It is a powerful story intended to bring goosebumps to the back of our necks, a tale that demands attention. There is no getting around it, the message is clear, and this is why it makes us uncomfortable.

Jesus was traveling to Jerusalem when he was met by a rich young ruler who knelt at his feet. Well, Mark doesn't actually say that he is "young." Matthew is the one who calls him "young," and Luke says that he was a "ruler." Mark just calls him a generic "man." So it seems that this "man", who stands before Jesus, represents all of us. He had "great possessions," but so do we when we are compared to the vast majority of the world. Even in these challenging economic times, we have more than we need.

"Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" It is an interesting choice of words. "How can I inherit eternal life?" Obviously, he thought he knew the answer.

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But, Jesus knew the heart of this man in an instant, "Why are you asking me, you already know? Follow the commandments." At this point, the man must have smiled inwardly. He had followed the letter of the law his whole life. If this was all that was needed he had it made, he was safe.

The scriptures tell us that Jesus loved this man in that instant. He could see the man was trying to understand what was asked of him and even made the effort to come and see Jesus so that his questions would be answered. The man wanted confirmation that he was doing the right things and he believed that Jesus could offer this.

"You lack one thing; go, sell what you own and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, then follow me." When the man heard this he was shocked and walked away grieving. He had many possessions, Jesus asked too much. How could he give up what he had spent a lifetime to acquire?

What we may not understand is in Jesus' time it was a common belief that wealth made the performance of religious duties possible. Wealth was seen as a gift from God, if you were rich then you were blessed. Of course, this meant that God was punishing the poor. Unfortunately, this belief is still prevalent. We judge the success of a person based on how much they own, or how much they make.

Jesus challenges this idea and reminds us that belief is not based upon wealth or possessions but on faith. He asked the rich man to give up the one thing that mattered most in his life but the man could not make this sacrifice because he believed that wealth and possessions defined him.

This story is really about us, a man meets Jesus and was asked to follow, but decided that it was too difficult, too much was asked. He walked away, and as far as I know, this is one of the few stories in the gospels in which someone who was called refused to follow.

We think badly about this man until we realize that we are just like him. Our lives are dominated by everything other than God, and faith is far down our list compared to work, money, or other reflections of success. We are shocked and walk away grieving when we are told that we have to sacrifice

to serve Christ. Worse still, we fool ourselves when we believe that if we had more: more time, money, or knowledge that we would become better Christians. It is easy to deceive ourselves.

After the man left Jesus told the disciples how hard it will be for the rich to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. This surprised the disciples. They saw wealth as a blessing from God. But, Jesus then says how difficult it will be for anyone to enter the Kingdom. "Then who will be saved?" the disciples ask? Jesus simply states, "We cannot save ourselves, but all things are possible to God."

Peter, who clearly did not understand what Jesus was saying, took his words literally and reminded Jesus that the disciples had done everything that had been asked of the rich man. They had given up family, friends, possessions, and even their homes for his sake, but Jesus knew that these things were not of primary importance to the disciples. They believed that their future was based upon the human power that Jesus would bring them when he came to glory on earth so the disciples did not understand the nature of Jesus' sacrifice or the need for their own.

The rich man and the disciples simply did not trust Jesus, they did not have the faith to let go of what was comfortable and follow. The people who Jesus loved could not give up what they knew and did not know how to measure success any other way.

Jesus reminds us that for Christians, faith is born of sacrifice. He proved this through his death, as pain and sorrow were transformed into joy and salvation through the glory of the resurrection.

So I ask again, what have we sacrificed? What have we given up for God? Jesus asked the rich man, the disciples, and us to sacrifice of ourselves for others. We are called to give up that which separates us from God and release the things that hinder our faith. But we are also reminded that perfect surrender is impossible, we cannot save ourselves.

The hope in this passage lies in the 27th verse. For God all things are possible. God sees the potential in each and every one of us and molds us to God's purpose. With the help of our Creator, we

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can learn to sacrifice, we can let go of what seems to be important and replace it with what is truly important.

Only by clearing the clutter, removing those things that isolate us from God, laying our deepest cares and concerns upon the altar of faith, and opening ourselves to the power of the Holy Spirit, can we faithfully follow our Lord. When this happens the impossible becomes possible, God works through us not only for our salvation, but for the good of others, and we become the people of God.

Thanks be to God, Amen.



COVID-19 CHURCH PROTOCOLS

(Approved by the Board on August 12.)

- **One 9:30 a.m. service** will be offered at least through May 2022. First Christian Church offers virtual services ([facebook.com/fcchsv](https://www.facebook.com/fcchsv), [twitch.tv/fcchsv](https://www.twitch.tv/fcchsv), or First Christian Church Huntsville on YouTube) 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 at all times inside the church is encouraged for everyone.**
- 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.
- **Every other row of pews is roped off on the pulpit side of the sanctuary to allow individuals to practice social distancing so that they may worship at their level of comfort. The front section on the pulpit side is the least impacted zone with our heating and cooling system.**
- **Attendees may vocalize** during the service, such as stating the Lord's Prayer, litanies, etc., and sing hymns/songs when lyrics are projected on the screens.
- Offerings may be placed in the brass plate when exiting the sanctuary or sent by mail.
- Food, coffee, and other hospitality services remain suspended until further notice.
- **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