



PREPARING FOR CHANGE

I admit that getting into the Advent and Christmas spirit is a little harder for me this year. I have always thought that Christmas items would show up too soon on the shelves of stores, but now my family traditions are changing as well. We are now traveling to Fishers, Indiana for our Thanksgiving celebration with my mother's side of the family. My cousin has a large house that we can all fit in and my Aunt and Uncle Aden are getting to the point where they cannot host everyone.

We need to remember that while Christmas and Advent are times of joy for some, they are times of sorrow for others. The loss of loved ones and the absence of family, can lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation. The holiday season can be incredibly difficult for those who do not fit into our societal molds and often their pain and discomfort is masked by the celebratory spirit around them.

As followers of Christ we are called to make sure that those who are hurting find solace and comfort. I hope that in the weeks to come you will take a look around you and seek out those who may be lost on lonely. In this time where visiting can be difficult, send a card or call someone who needs a friendly voice. They will appreciate it and you will help spread the joy that is Christmas.

As exciting as Advent and Christmas can be, as Christians our celebration is deeper because it is not based on the needs of our society or the materialism of our culture, rather it is based on the ultimate gift of God to us. The glory of Jesus Christ was not reflected in his birthplace; it shined in the sky as the angels sang of his coming, rang forth in the message of the Shepherds, and found true measure in Mary as she treasured their words and pondered them in her heart.

The most important aspect of this season is not the preparation of our homes but the preparation of our lives for the coming of Christ. Together we celebrate the certainty of God's promises, that the Emmanuel, the God with us, came to earth to experience humanity, and doing so provided forgiveness and salvation for all.

It is my hope that each and every one of you will find joy in the season of Advent, have a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. May the love of God enfold you, the blessings of Jesus Christ flow down upon you, and the encouragement of the Holy Spirit give you strength so that the year ahead will be filled with wonder and joy.

Thanks be to God, Amen.

CONGREGATIONAL BUDGET MEETING
Following Worship Service on Sunday, December 10

The *Journey* is published on the **first and third Monday** of the month.
The **deadline** for *Journey* submissions is **9:00 a.m. Thursday, December 14**. Email to: publisher@fcc-hsv.org

3209 Whitesburg Drive, Huntsville, Alabama 35802
Telephone: 256-881-0150

FUNKY CHRISTMAS FASHION SHOW!

Hello all! Get ready for a brand-new fundraiser led by the youth group! Introducing the Funky Christmas Fashion show. This fundraiser doubles as a fun event for the entire church. **Following the 5:30 meal on Wednesday, December 7**, join the youth for a night of Christmas cheer and ugly Christmas sweaters to fund Christmas presents for 5 local children. The way the Funky Christmas Fashion show works is that members of the church, children's group, and youth group sign up to dress up in their ugliest, funkiest, most adorable, Christmas outfits and show them off to the congregation in the fashion show of the advent season. The fundraising part of this event happens directly following the runway show when all are invited to vote for their favorite contestant, one dollar is equal to one vote! At the end of this event, we will tally the votes and announce the winner!



Make sure to mark your calendars for **December 7th at 5:30 pm** in McMains! If you are interested in participating in the fashion show or would like to donate towards the shopping please contact Alyssa Burton at alyssa@fcc-hsv.org

CHURCH OFFICE HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Friday, December 22, closes at 12:30 pm
Monday, December 25, closed.
Friday, December 29, closes at 12:30 pm
Monday, January 1, closed.

Community Outreach (CO) is asking for regular donations of hygiene products such as: sanitary pads, tampons, and/or period underwear (period-proof underwear is a relatively new period product that looks and feels like regular underwear.). The donations will support girls at three schools - Huntsville Junior High School, McNair School, and Morris School - who do not have funds to purchase these products. A donation site is located in the church Narthex. Please consider helping with this needed project.

Margaret J. Vann



LONG TERM PRAYER CONCERNS



A.J. Arisco, relative of Pam Clasgens
Ken Brown
Barbara Chandler, friend of Jackie Volinski
Vonda Dihm
Jala Hawkins, granddaughter of Mona Qualls
Lane Ingram, friend of Jean Patterson
Kalyn Kilgore, daughter of Rodger & Mona Qualls
Tom & Gail Killough
Stephen McCreary
Petra Sue Richey
Mary Spencer
Jay & Cynthia Wright, father of Holly Ahlbin

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 list.

REGIONAL PRAYER REQUESTS

Westwood Christian Church, Pensacola, FL
Ambassadors for Christ, Greenville, AL

IRS CREDIT FOR 2023 GIVING

Thank you so much for your tithes and offerings; they have a tremendous impact on the missions and ministries of our church. Please remember that all contributions to be credited toward 2023 giving must be received by the church office **before 12:30 pm on Friday, December 29, 2023** (that is when the office closes for New Year's Eve) or in the **collection plate on Sunday, December 31**. Mailed contributions may be credited toward your 2023 giving as long as they are **postmarked by December 30, 2023**. (If mailing, make sure to note collection times to ensure the appropriate postmark.)

IRS regulations require that checks received after December 31, even if dated December 31 or prior (unless received by mail postmarked December 30 or prior), will be credited to your 2024 giving and not 2023.

STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN 2024

Our church is very appreciative of your response to the 2024 Stewardship Campaign, with a special thanks to those who shared their thoughts on stewardship during Sunday morning services. Numbers are not complete yet, so you still have time to submit your estimate of giving card for next year. Please mail, turn in, or call in your estimate to the church office as soon as possible. Our cup truly runs over with blessings at First Christian Church.

Sue & Jeff Seward
Stewardship Campaign Co-chairs

ATTENDANCE

Nov. 26: In-Person Worship Service: 77
Small Groups (During week & Sunday): 22
Dec. 3 In-Person Worship Service: 97
Small Groups (During week & Sunday): 93

CONDOLENCES to the family of Wayne Plunket, former member, who passed on Monday, November 26.



SUNDAY'S FOOD BASKETS are given in honor of Stan Ball's birthday by Matt & Karen Ball and in honor of Colleen Cannon Jenkins' & Thomas Jenkins' birthdays by Beverly & James Cannon.

Want to start a new spiritual discipline or continue a tradition? Why not keep a "blessing box" handy? You can celebrate blessings large or small on a regular basis by dropping a coin or more in as an intentional, "Thank You, God." You can use your own container or pick up a CWM blessing box (created in 1953) from your circle or from the narrow table in the Commons hallway. Contents will be collected in late March or April to support the Disciples Mission Fund.

