

APRIL 2020

CONNECTIONS

**HOLD ONTO HOPE
THIS EASTER**

CORONAVIRUS

UPDATE

This newsletter contains many well-crafted and prepared ministry opportunities that we HOPE to be able to move forward with, but due to the spread of COVID-19, we realize our plans may need to adapt or be canceled. We will continue to do our best to inform you as time goes on. Know that we will be following guidelines regarding safe practices from the Department of Health and the CDC for when we gather in person together.

Until then, we encourage every small group (Life group, Dinner group, Sunday school class, short term study group, etc.) to be the hands and feet of Christ by regularly reaching out to those in your group and beyond to check in and see how others are doing. Contact RG Wilson-Lyons at RG@firstchurchbhm.com if your group would like access to the First Church Zoom account so that you can remotely hold group meetings. Tune into our Facebook page for worship each Sunday and be on the lookout for other ways to connect with us via social media. We ask that you please let one of our pastors know of any pastoral needs that you become aware of or of ways the church may be able to step up and help someone in our community during this time.

We implore each of us at this time to wash our hands, stay home as much as possible and practice safe social distancing.

FIRST CHURCH BIRMINGHAM PRESENTS:

lunchtime

L

LIVE

During this time that we must practice social distancing and not meet together in person, First Church has launched Lunch Time Live, a daily Facebook Live interactive experience on Monday - Saturday at noon, we will offer a short 10-15 minute reflection, musical piece, or simply something fun that we hope you will join in by offering your comments, feedback, and suggestions for future Lunch Time Live topics. Simply click on First Church's Facebook page everyday at noon to participate.

GOING THE **EXTRAMILE**

THE GOOD SAMARITAN PARABLE

Jesus loved to tell parables: Stories that hold deep truth; stories that reflect the nature of the Divine, humanity and how the world might work if we were in tune with the flow of love. During this time of anxiety and fear, we will take three weeks to explore the parable of the Good Samaritan and what it means to go the extra mile for others. We will explore the story from the position of each of the characters seeking to learn more about ourselves and how we can live out the truest nature of our identity...to be compassionate people of grace.

4.19.20 | **THE PRIEST AND LEVITE**
WHEN WE DON'T ACT WITH COMPASSION

LUKE 10:25-37, JAMES 2:1-18, AND ISAIAH 40:21-31

APRIL 26 | **DISCOVERY WEEKEND**

**subject to cancellation based upon Health Department recommendations*

MAY 3 | **THE SAMARITAN**
WHEN WE DO ACT WITH COMPASSION

LUKE 10:25-37, COLOSSIANS 3: 9B-17, AND ISAIAH 42: 1-9

MAY 10 | **THE WOUNDED ONE**
WHEN WE ARE IN NEED OF COMPASSION

LUKE 10:25-37, HEBREWS 4:14-16 AND ISAIAH 42:21- 43:5A

MAUNDY THURSDAY

THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 6:30PM IN THE SANCTUARY

We hope you will join us on Thursday, April 9 for our Maundy Thursday service at 6:30pm in the Sanctuary. Maundy Thursday is a service observed by United Methodists and many other Christians on the Thursday of Holy Week where we remember Jesus' last supper and arrest in the garden. It's a service that contemplates Jesus' passionate love poured out during his last hours where we will hear that story and receive Holy Communion.

***SUBJECT TO CANCELLATION BASED UPON HEALTH DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**

GOOD FRIDAY

FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 12:00PM IN THE SANCTUARY

You are invited to join us for a Tenebrae service on Good Friday, April 10 at 12:00pm in the Sanctuary as we commemorate the crucifixion and death of Jesus. The word Tenebrae is Latin for "darkness" or "shadows," and describes a service that offers prolonged meditation on the suffering of Christ. Through dramatic readings and the extinguishing of light we will remember what it must have felt like in those moments when Christ's death darkened the world.

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THE
RESIST HARM
MOVEMENT

LIGHT

“I am the LIGHT of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the LIGHT of life.”

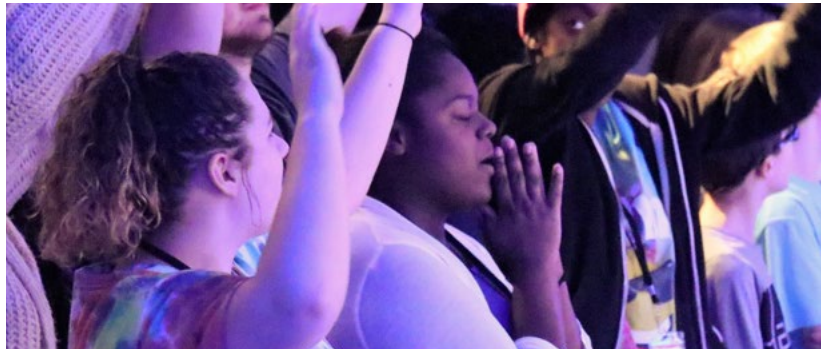
JOHN 8:12 (NRSV)

Within the current struggles of the United Methodist Church it is easy to see how the LIGHT of Christ has been diminished because of the unjust policies regarding inclusion of ALL persons. That is why this month it is more important than ever that we shine the LIGHT of Christ in prophetic and loving ways. You are invited to take pictures at the flower cross on Easter Sunday, April 12, in our courtyard and post to social media along with the hashtags #LoveWins, #LetYourLightShine and #ResistHarm.

You are also encouraged to weekly LIGHT a candle and pray for our General Conference delegates to have courageous love that will shine the LIGHT of Christ to ALL the world.

APRIL 24 - 26

DISCOVERY WEEKEND 2020



***SUBJECT TO CANCELLATION BASED UPON HEALTH DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**



In light of most recent news of the Coronavirus, Birmingham-Southern is indefinitely postponing all on-campus outside events, including the First Church Egg Hunt scheduled for April 5th. We will update you as the Children's Ministry at First Church makes plans for rescheduling our Egg Hunt.

**MAKE
YOUR
MARK**

CITY KIDS ARTS CAMP

JUNE 15 - 19 | MONDAY - THURSDAY 8:45AM - 1:00PM | FRIDAY 8:45AM - 7:00 PM

The Bible gives us many examples of leaders and followers: stories which model characteristics of humble followers and leaders. Arts Camp interactive stories not only teach about Bible times, but also introduce campers to young people across the globe who are Making their Mark in our world, today.

**REGISTRATION IS OPEN NOW FOR CAMPERS, YOUTH AND VOLUNTEERS
BE A PART OF ONE OF THE BEST EVENTS WE HAVE AT FIRST CHURCH!**

REGISTER ONLINE

All Campers – space is limited Register under the coming up tab on the First Church Website

NEW TO CAMP

All youth and adult volunteers are asked to register online and let us know where you prefer to serve! You will also have the opportunity to purchase a camp t-shirt.

Register under the coming up tab on our website.

DONATIONS

If you would like to make a monetary donation, please visit our online giving page and select the "City Kids Arts Camp Donation" fund or mark "Arts Camp donation" in the memo line of your check.

It takes over 100 volunteers to facilitate this week-long camp and we need your help. Please consider donating your time to help make Arts Camp 2020 a great success! For more information, contact Linda Thorne at Linda@firstchurchbhm.com.

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STAFF PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENTS



We are sad that there are a number of departures from our staff this coming summer. Both Mary Page Wilson-Lyons and Emily Nelms Chastain have been accepted into PHD programs that require their families to leave the state. We hate to lose them all but are proud of their accomplishments and grateful for their ministry.

Staff Parish Relations Committee is pleased to announce that Jonathan Goss will become our Associate Pastor with primary responsibility for preaching the Loft worship service. Jonathan will be licensed at Annual Conference on May 30, 2020 in Huntsville. First Church is invited to attend and show support for Jonathan in this accomplishment. Rev. Katie Gilbert will also transition to being our Executive Pastor this summer. With these transitions First Church is now looking for a new Youth Pastor. You can find the Youth Pastor job description on our website under 'Job Openings'. We are also pleased to have Ian Goymer who serving as a pastoral intern on our staff as he considers attending seminary.

THANK YOU FOR JONATHAN GOSS

~ SUNDAY, MAY 3 IN THE LARGE DINING ROOM ~

While Jonathan isn't leaving us, he is transitioning to a new role and we want to thank him for all he has done as our Youth Pastor. On Sunday, May 3 in the Large Dining Room following worship we will celebrate Jonathan Goss and the wonderful 14 years of youth ministry he has gifted us with. This is a time come together to say thank you for the years of dedicated service, laughter, transformation, hard work, and fun that we have experienced under Jonathan's leadership.

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HELLO, FIRST CHURCH FAMILY...

Upon graduation from seminary, I always had an urge to pursue further education and potentially teach in a seminary setting similar to the experience that I had as a hybrid student at Claremont School of Theology. This urging has been a piece of my vocational call: to develop leaders within the church, especially of women and young people.

It is bittersweet to let you know that I have been accepted to the PhD program at Boston University School of Theology with a focus on Church History. While I am so excited for this opportunity, I am sad that I will be departing such a wonderful congregation that has loved and supported me as I followed my calling into ministry, completed seminary, and stood before you each week as your Deacon in Residence.

Ted and I will likely be departing later this summer and relocating to Boston for the next five years.

I want to tell you now, even with many weeks remaining in my stead, that it has been an honor to learn alongside you, to love and to be loved by you, and to serve with you in the last year. The experiences that I have gained while serving at First Church have made me not only a better pastor, but a better human, and for that I am so incredibly grateful. You've been such an important part of my journey, and I could never repay the love and life you've shown me.

With deep love and affection,
Rev. Emily Nelms Chastain



In light of all the precautions in place at church for the Coronavirus, Circle One has decided to cancel the Spring Bake sale that usually takes place on Palm Sunday. I know we will all be sorry to miss out on our great baked goods, but hopefully we will be back in the fall.

As you know, all proceeds from this sale go to Missions, with our own Arts Camp being one of the recipients of the money. If you would like to make a donation to the Bake Sale proceeds, please mail a check payable to Ginger Gambill and mail it to 2237 Pine Crest Dr., Birmingham, AL 35216, and put Circle One Bake Sale in the memo line. Thanks for your continued support!

NEW MEMBER PRAYERS FOR FIRST CHURCH

AS WE SEEK TO BE
AN OPEN PLACE FOR ALL
MY PRAYER FOR FIRST CHURCH IS:

With its ever open doors and always open heart, I pray First Church continues on its successful path of commitment to inclusivity for all who hope to find a space in which they can be their authentic self. I pray for the health and happiness of the patrons of First Church, and that in times of darkness the glow of Faith always guides you. - *Meghan Ralph*

That First Church will continue to be a place for grace for all of God's creation. - *Wade Parker*

Continued growth in outreach to the community and more opportunities for learning. - *Traci Parker*

May the Lord continue to bless this congregation, enrich its membership with a diverse representation of all of God's children; to grow and thrive and be a constant source of inspiration and edification for our spiritual journey; and provide the opportunities that I can help fulfill First Church's mission to be an open place for all. - *Rob Hardison*



FIRST CHURCH BIRMINGHAM'S
ON CALL SCHEDULE

In an effort to make sure we are providing everyone in our congregation with the pastoral care needed, particularly in crisis situations, we want you to be aware of our on-call schedule going forward. If you have a pastoral care need Monday - Thursday, you can call the church office or email any of our pastors and we will respond promptly. However, if you have a pastoral care need Friday - Sunday, below is the on-call schedule for the month. You can reach the person by email, cell phone, or by clicking the "pastor on-call" option on the church phone.

APRIL 3 - 5 | JONATHAN GOSS

APRIL 10 - 12 | EMILY NELMS CHASTAIN

APRIL 17 - 19 | R.G. WILSON-LYONS

APRIL 24 - 26 | STEPHANIE ARNOLD



APRIL CALENDAR

APRIL 5

7:00pm - Enneagram Group

APRIL 13

6:00pm - Executive Council

APRIL 24

~ Discovery Weekend ~

APRIL 9

6:30pm - Maundy Thursday Service

APRIL 15

11:30am - Garden Club

APRIL 25

~ Discovery Weekend ~
5:30PM - DW Prayer Service

APRIL 10

12:00pm - Good Friday Service

APRIL 21

6:00pm - Trustees

APRIL 26

~ Discovery Weekend ~
12:00pm - GC Learning Sessions

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WEEKLY CALENDAR

TUESDAYS:

6:30pm - Young Adult Small Group

WEDNESDAYS:

1:00pm - Prayer Shawl Knitters

5:30pm - Youth Bible Study

6:30pm - Chancel Choir Rehearsal

FRIDAYS:

~ Church Office Closed ~

6:45am - Men's Prayer Breakfast

SUNDAYS:

8:30am - Communion Service

9:45am - Sunday School

11:00am - The Loft & Sanctuary Services

5:15pm - Youth Bible Study

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FIRST CHURCH BIRMINGHAM STAFF

Senior Pastor: Stephanie York Arnold	Stephanie@firstchurchbhm.com
Pastor: R.G. Wilson-Lyons	RG@firstchurchbhm.com
Minister of Invitation: Katie Gilbert	Katie@firstchurchbhm.com
Minister of Youth & Young Adults: Jonathan Goss	Jonathan@firstchurchbhm.com
Minister of Children & Church Events: Linda Underwood Thorne	Linda@firstchurchbhm.com
Minster to the Grieving: Herb Williamson	Herb@firstchurchbhm.com
Deacon in Residence: Emily Nelms Chastain	Emily@firstchurchbhm.com
Organist: Cathy Shelton	Cathy@firstchurchbhm.com
Design: Blake Hobbs	Blake@firstchurchbhm.com
Choir Director: Patrick Evans	Patrick@firstchurchbhm.com
Loft Worship Leader: Katherine Mullen	Katherine@firstchurchbhm.com
Office Administrator: Peg Thompson	Peg@firstchurchbhm.com
Business Administrator: Steve Pitts	Steve@firstchurchbhm.com
Maintenance Supervisor: Ron Dates	Ron@firstchurchbhm.com
Nursery Director: Ginger Gambill	Ginger@firstchurchbhm.com
Wedding Director: Betsy Pate	Betsy@firstchurchbhm.com
Executive Director of Early Learning Center: Robin Pate	ELC@firstchurchbhm.com



an OPEN place for ALL to **WORSHIP, GROW,** and **SERVE**

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