

OCTOBER 2020

CONNECTIONS

A group of people and dogs are gathered in a park setting, engaged in conversation and activities. The scene is set outdoors with large trees in the background. People are sitting on chairs and standing, some wearing face masks. A dog is visible in the foreground. The overall atmosphere is social and community-oriented.

FINDING COMMUNITY

Outdoor MOVIE NIGHT

On **Sunday, October 18**, just as the sun sets, we will gather in the First Church parking lot for a Halloween movie night on a cool 30ft outdoor movie screen for our entire community! The Fun Team encourages all ages to make a special effort to attend this fun night, watch Disney PIXAR's **coco**, eat delicious popcorn, and hang out with your church family.

We will have the parking lot located on 18th Street North sectioned off so that you will be distanced from your neighbor, in addition to all wearing masks. Costumes are encouraged for children and adults.

The movie will begin promptly at 6:30pm, so come early to set up and get your treats! Registration is required by Wednesday, October 14. You can register now by clicking **HERE**. Contact Linda Thorne at Linda@firstchurchbhm.com for more information.

WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4

During the week leading up to our World Communion Service you will be invited to join the First Church staff in cooking foods from around the world during lunchtime live Tuesday, September 29 through Thursday, October 1. Some of us will bake bread and others will invite you to try creating other worldly flavors like hummus. We will share our recipes and invite you to come alongside us as we create an at home World Communion table with a variety of tastes and flavors.



OCTOBER 4, 2020 FROM 1:00 - 2:30 PM

SAFE | SANCTUARY

zoom TRAINING

ARE YOU PLANNING TO VOLUNTEER OR WORK WITH CHILDREN OR YOUTH IN A ZOOM MEETING OR SOCIALLY DISTANCED GATHERING? ARE YOU HOPING TO WORK IN OTHER WAYS WITH OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN 2020/2021? THIS TRAINING IS FOR YOU! WE NEED ALL OF THOSE THAT CAN POSSIBLY ATTEND THIS TRAINING TO PLEASE REGISTER AND BE PRESENT ON OCTOBER 4, 2020 TO HELP US ABIDE BY OUR SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A SAFE SANCTUARY CHURCH? FIRST CHURCH, IN COVENANT WITH ALL UNITED METHODIST CONGREGATIONS, FOLLOWS A POLICY THAT SETS STANDARDS FOR THE SUPERVISION OF FIRST CHURCH CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND VULNERABLE ADULTS IN OUR CARE. OUR NEXT TRAINING WILL BE ON OCTOBER 4 FROM 1:00 – 2:30 PM VIA ZOOM.

PLEASE REGISTER BY CLICKING **HERE**. YOU WILL RECEIVE PAPERWORK AND BACKGROUND CHECK INSTRUCTIONS VIA EMAIL TO COMPLETE PRIOR TO OUR ZOOM MEETING. AFTER THE ZOOM MEETING, YOU WILL HAVE A SHORT ONLINE QUIZ TO COMPLETE THE TRAINING PROCESS.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT
LINDA THORNE AT LINDA@FIRSTCHURCHBHM.COM OR
TIFFANY DOWDY AT TIFFANY@FIRSTCHURCHBHM.COM.

★ ★ ★ ★ *The* ★ ★ ★ ★

POLITICS *Of* JESUS

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

John Howard Yoder in his groundbreaking book, *The Politics of Jesus* writes, "Jesus was not just a moralist whose teachings had some political implications; he was not primarily a teacher of spirituality whose public ministry unfortunately was seen in a political light; he was not just a sacrificial lamb preparing for his immolation, or a God-Man whose divine status calls us to disregard his humanity. Jesus was, in his divinely mandated (i.e., promised, anointed, messianic) prophethood, priesthood, and kingship, the bearer of a new possibility of human, social, and therefore political relationships."

As followers of Jesus, we are called to embody Jesus' politics that transcend categories of Republican or Democrat, liberal or conservative, and instead affirm a radically inclusive vision centered on love of one another. A vision where the marginalized are given places of honor, where justice is the work of all of us, and where nonviolence is the means by which we live out this reality. As we approach one of the most divisive elections in any of our lifetimes, this sermon series will invite us to consider how the politics of Jesus not only form how we vote, but how we live, work, protest, advocate, and LOVE one another in the world not just in an election year, but all the time.

★ ★

10.11.20

JUBILEE JUSTICE MEANS MARGINALIZED PEOPLE MATTER

(*LUKE 4: 16-21*)

10.18.20

JESUS' THIRD WAY

(*MATTHEW 5: 38-48*)

10.25.20

I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO GOD OVER NATION

(*MATTHEW 6: 24, PHILIPPIANS 2: 5-11*)

★ ★

Please note that following this sermon series, as we near Election Day, we will be offering space for prayer in the Sanctuary on October 14 and 25 as well as November 3 and 4.

Please see the Seeking Sanctuary times of prayer for more information.

Seeking SANCTUARY

{ TIMES OF PRAYER }

For the coming months we want to regularly offer you the opportunity to schedule time to pray in our beautiful and beloved Sanctuary. While we are doing all we can to minimize risk for exposure to COVID-19 we know we cannot eliminate all risk. We ask that if you are in a vulnerable population whether that is due to age, pre-existing medical conditions, or any other reason, please do not sign-up for this opportunity. We love you too much for you to risk greater exposure at this time. Likewise, if you have or have reason to believe you may have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 please do not sign up or come so that you do not inadvertently expose others. Anyone seeking to participate must adhere to the guidelines agreed upon by our staff and lay leadership. The Sanctuary will be open for prayer at the following times:

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14 | 12:30PM – 1:00PM

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25 | 2:00PM – 2:30PM

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3 | 12:30 – 1:00PM

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4 | 12:30 – 1:00PM

In order to attend you **MUST** sign-up [HERE](#). Signing-up is necessary to limit space and to collect necessary information for contact tracing in the event that we learn there has been possible COVID-19 exposure. We will not allow entry to anyone walking up without prior registration. In addition, upon registering you must read and agree to all of the guidelines that you see listed.

ALL SAINTS

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1

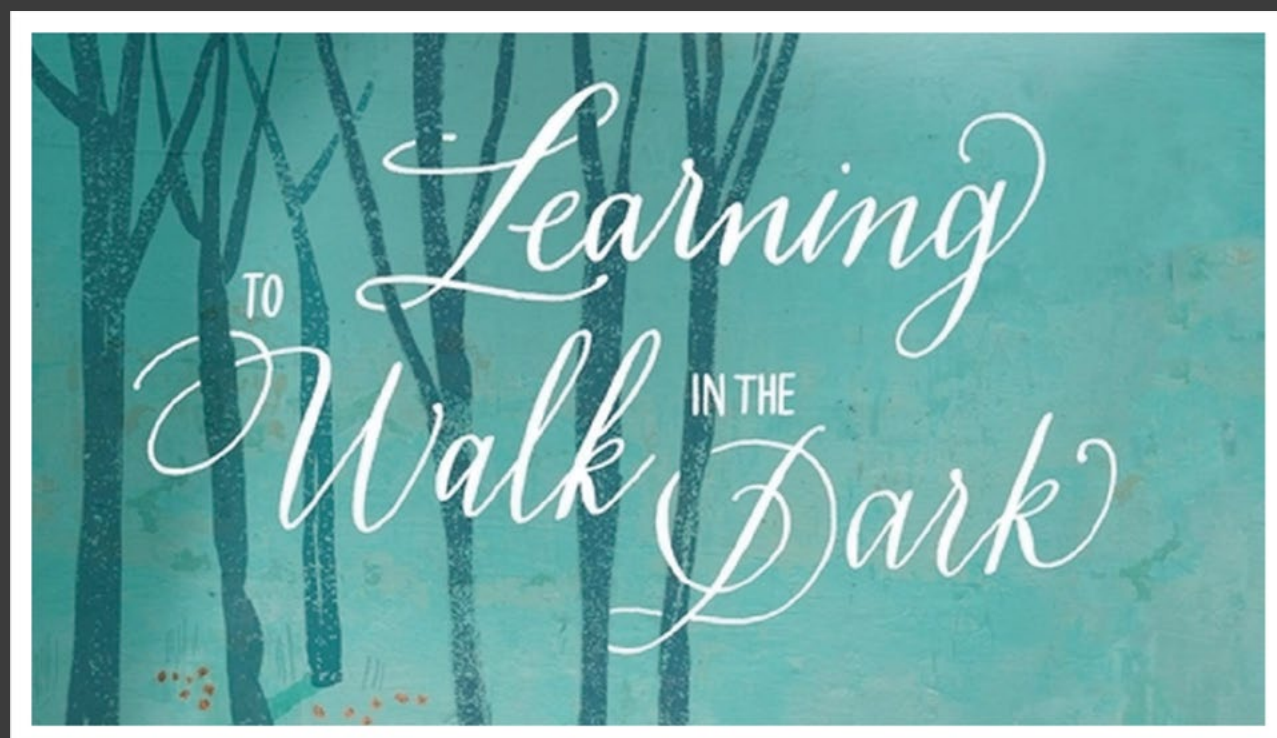
THIS YEAR WE WILL CELEBRATE ALL SAINTS WITH A VIRTUAL WORSHIP SERVICE THAT IS FILLED WITH BEAUTIFUL CHORAL SINGING AND THE CALLING BY NAME OF THOSE WHO HAVE DIED IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS, AS WE CELEBRATE THEIR CONTINUAL LOVE AND PRESENCE IN OUR LIVES. WHILE WE WILL CALL THE NAMES OF ALL CHURCH MEMBERS WHO HAVE PASSED WE ALSO INVITE YOU TO SHARE WITH US OTHERS YOU LOVE WHO MAY NOT HAVE BEEN A MEMBER OF FIRST CHURCH. IF YOU HAVE A LOVED ONE WHO HAS PASSED AWAY IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS WE INVITE YOU TO SEND IN THEIR NAME AND A PICTURE TO BE INCLUDED IN THIS YEAR'S CELEBRATION OF ALL OUR BELOVED SAINTS. YOU CAN SEND THESE PICTURES AND NAMES TO PEG THOMPSON AT PEG@FIRSTCHURCHBHM.COM BY OCTOBER 20.

(PLEASE NOTE THERE WILL BE ONE 11:00AM SERVICE OFFERED FOR ALL SAINTS SUNDAY AS THERE WILL ALSO ONLY BE ONE 11:00AM WORSHIP SERVICE OFFERED FOR WORLD COMMUNION.)

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE



A big **THANK YOU** to all those who helped make our With Love Stewardship campaign a success this year. Thank you to those who have turned in your pledge card already, those who baked cookies, stuffed bags and mailers, composed handwritten cards, made videos, and those who made deliveries. We certainly know that without all of you giving generously of your resources and your time we would not have been able to pull off our With Love deliveries. We look forward to sharing more about the success of our campaign in the coming days. If you have not yet made your pledge please do so by clicking **HERE**.



“I have learned things in the dark that I could never have learned in the light, things that have saved my life over and over again, so that there is really only one logical conclusion. I need darkness as much as I need light.”

– Barbara Brown Taylor

During the month of November we will use Barbara Brown Taylor’s *Learning to Walk in the Dark* as a guide for our worship together. As we move into a season where the literal darkness in our days grows longer and the figurative darkness of the times we are living in continues, we will consider the ways that the dark can teach us more than we can ever learn in the light alone. With this opportunity you will be invited to choose if you prefer to meet in a small group socially distanced with masks (Thursdays, November 5, 12, & 19 at 6:00pm) or in a group via Zoom (Tuesdays, November 10, 17, & 24 at 6:00pm). If you would like to participate in one of these small group gatherings please register [HERE](#) and select your preference.

STUDENT MINISTRY

AT FIRST CHURCH

Our Student Ministry is currently meeting in-person on Sunday nights at Railroad Park to play socially distanced games and share a lesson together. We are open for all 6th-12th grade students who want to join in a safe environment to have fun and learn more about the amazing God we serve. You can register for each Sunday's gathering by emailing Tiffany.

STUDENT MINISTRY SCHEDULE

10.4 | YOUTH GROUP

10.7 | DEADLINE TO SIGN-UP FOR YOUTH CAMPOUT

10.11 | YOUTH GROUP

10.17-18 | YOUTH CAMPOUT

10.25 | YOUTH GROUP

We want to ensure each student, despite their level of involvement, feels loved and seen by our ministry. We are currently delivering care bags to each student's home. If you have a student who has not received their care bag, please contact Tiffany to schedule a delivery time.

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT OUR STUDENT MINISTRY

- Be in prayer for our students, their families, and our leadership
- Serve as a Prayer Partner for a student (*more information below*)
- Spend an hour and a half on Sunday playing games, meeting students, and helping youth grow in their faith
- Go camping with us!
- Sponsor a meal for one of our gatherings (*COVID restrictions prevent pot-luck style meals*)
- Be creative - share a passion, hobby, or help think of ways we can reach more youth in our community

If you are interested in getting involved, serving, or learning more about our youth ministry contact Tiffany at Tiffany@firstchurchbhm.com

FIRST CHURCH BIRMINGHAM

PRAYER *Partners*

Right now the world is a little crazy for everyone but especially for our students heading back to school. Middle School and High School can be challenging all on its own. Now add a pandemic, social unrest, an environmental crisis, tons of homework, and navigating your faith. All of this can be extremely overwhelming for anyone. Part of being the church is uplifting one another. We are starting a new opportunity to support our youth through prayer.

As a prayer partner, you would be saying “yes” to praying for our students and their families. You will be partnered with one of our awesome youth, simply to be in prayer for them. While prayer is a simple ask, it has a major impact. You are not volunteering to show up for programs, lock-in, or buy them stuff. We are inviting you to take the time to pray for one specific student each day. We will update you on any prayer request they share in youth group, a major test they have coming up, things that are stressing them out, and overall questions they are wrestling with in their faith. This is a chance to ensure that each student feels loved, seen, and known by name. If you are interested in taking on the challenge of praying for one of our students, email Tiffany at tiffany@firstchurchbhm.com.

WE BUILD

Micah 6:8 has become synonymous with social justice in the life of the church. "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" A priority that First Church is committed to is doing justice. If we choose to follow the example of Christ then we can no longer turn a blind eye to the injustices suffered by the less powerful and disenfranchised in our society. Yet, sometimes navigating our role as a church in doing justice can feel overwhelming.

First Church has been invited to support a new, exciting, and life-giving program at Urban Ministry. The new ministry is called WE Build. The "WE" is twofold. It represents West End where Urban Ministry is physically located but it also represents the collective "we" of the community living together and supporting one another. Urban Ministry believes the most significant resources in West End are her people and they want to invest in their people with homeownership.

Through working with the Birmingham Land Bank, Urban Ministry will buy neglected houses in West End and work with local residents who want to own a home. By expanding their current house-painting ministry into a home remodeling service called WE Build, Urban Ministry will teach young adults carpentry and repair skills. Once the homes are repaired, Urban will offer the young adults an interest-free path to homeownership. Not only will this ministry allow low-income residents to own homes and build wealth, it will also renovate neglected houses in West End while patronizing black-owned local businesses. West End residents will pay a monthly rent based on a percentage of their income. When their rent covers the cost of the house, Urban Ministry will deed the house into their name. It's that simple. The rent money collected from each tenant will be saved in a designated account that will be used to buy and renovate more homes. It is a ministry that multiplies.

You will be learning more about the ways in which First Church will have the opportunity to support WE Build, for now we ask you to pray for this ministry and those preparing to receive a refurbished home.



PROJECT 12.25

Based on our recent survey, we as a church have a significant desire to be generous this Advent season. We are expanding Project 12/25 this year to incorporate different opportunities for giving – addressing systemic needs in our city, addressing needs in our community partners, addressing needs in our First Church family. Along with the new direction and growth of 12/25 we have a commitment to supporting anyone within the First Church family who is experiencing economic struggle at this time. We know there may be some of you experiencing difficulty in this season due to COVID and its effects. Please contact Tiffany Dowdy at Tiffany@firstchurchbhm.com for more information.



CENTRAL DISTRICT CONNECTIONAL

CHARGE CONFERENCE

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11 AT 6:00PM

This year's Charge Conference will be held virtually on Wednesday, November 11 at 6:00pm. All are invited to attend this time where we, as a congregation, will prayerfully offer our 2021 Lay Leadership nominations, set our pastors' salaries, amend our Safe Sanctuary policy, and celebrate our ministry reports for the 2020 year. If you have any questions please contact Stephanie York Arnold at Stephanie@firstchurchbhm.com.



EARLY LEARNING CENTER

Our First Church Early Learning Center, which is a NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) accredited program, currently has vacancies for toddlers, 2's, 3's and 4's. For more information or to schedule a virtual tour, please call (205) 251-6059 ext. 2 or email elc@first-churchbhm.com. We would love to welcome your child to our ELC family!

NEW MEMBER PRAYERS FOR FIRST CHURCH

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

Joining the church during multiple pandemics, I pray for our individual and collective wellbeing. I pray for our ability to continue to discover new and creative ways to practice our vows to be truly an Open Place for All far beyond our physical church building and during this unique time in history.

-Kelly Ross-Davis

Continued growth in spreading the gospel of love and acceptance for ALL. We are ALL God's children and deserve to live with the peace of equality.

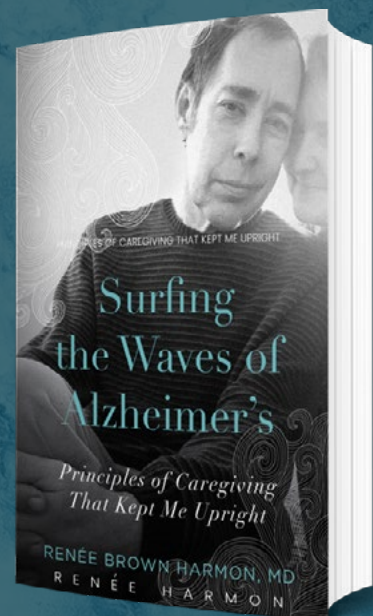
Valerie Thomas



SURFING THE WAVES OF ALZHEIMER'S



Renée and Harvey Harmon joined First Church in 1984, and immediately became active members. In 2010, Harvey was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease at the age of fifty. As a community, First Church was a tremendous support to both of them, as well as to their daughters, Elena and Christina, throughout Harvey's illness. Renée has chronicled their eight year long journey, and released her teaching memoir, *Surfing the Waves of Alzheimer's: Principles of Caregiving That Kept Me Upright*, on September 8, 2020. First Church and her people feature prominently in her book as it celebrates the gift of community, the gift of walking alongside, and the gift of faith. Renée will be hosting a book signing at Lancaster Park (the park behind Thomas Waters' office) on Saturday, October 3 from 10:00am -12:00pm. Books will be available for purchase, or you can bring a previously purchased copy to be signed. Visit Renée's website at www.reneeharmon.com for more information.



GIFTS RECEIVED BY THE CHURCH

TO THE MEMORIAL FUND

In Memory of Anne Clayton

From Owen McCord
From Trine Kristoffersen
From Angela Pruitt
From F. Lee Clayton

In Memory of Eunice Walters

From PJ Hester

In Memory of Hope Arnold

From Geneva Blackburn

In Memory of Virginia McLean

From Fletcher and Betty Thorington
From David Glasgow
From Geneva Blackburn

In Memory of June McAfee

From David Glasgow

In Memory of Dorris Deason

From Betty White
From Charlie Waldrep
From Charlotte Rudy
From Larry Contri

In Memory of Mark Deierhoi

From Henry and Marion Lagman
From Joe and Jenny Walker
From Brian and Angel Garrett

In Memory of Buddy Ramsey

From Joe and Jenny Walker
From Jane McKenzie
From Fletcher and Betty Thorington
From John and Betty McMahon
From Henry and Marion Lagman
From Stewart and Robin Jackson
From Anne Jackson
From David and Terri Glasgow
From Jane Gibbs
From Retha Dorough
From Peggy Batcheler
From Brian and Angel Garrett
From Chris and Jenny Shaw
From Lisa Malone
From Jean Malone
From Ed and Lila Hardin
From John and Sally Bowers
From Nancy Guthrie
From Denson Wood
From Larry and Sharron Schlosser
From Marsha Robins
From Sharon Phelps
From Leitman Perlman
From George and Betty Likis
From Sara Dominick Clark
From Geneva Blackburn
From Kay Stalnaker
From Ellen Patterson
From Barbara Albert
From Anne Pinkston
From Frances Hibdon

TO THE MUSIC FUND

In Memory of Virginia McLean

From Larry Ward

In Memory of Ray Floyd

From Larry Ward

In Memory of June McAfee

From Larry Ward

In Memory of Hope Arnold

From Larry Ward

In Memory of Dorris Deason

From Larry Ward

In Memory of Buddy Ramsey

From Larry Ward

In Memory of Jim Nelson

From Larry Ward

OCTOBER CALENDAR

OCTOBER 4

1:00pm - Safe Sanctuary Training

OCTOBER 12

6:00pm - Executive Council

OCTOBER 14

12:30pm - Seeking Sanctuary

OCTOBER 18

6:30pm - Outdoor Movie Night

OCTOBER 21

6:00pm - Trustees

OCTOBER 25

2:00pm - Seeking Sanctuary

WEEKLY CALENDAR

SUNDAY

9:00am - Preschool Sunday School Email

10:00am - Elementary Sunday School Zoom

11:00am - Loft & Sanctary Online Worship

5:00pm - Youth Group

MONDAY

6:00pm - *Shameless* Book Study

TUESDAY

6:30pm - Howard Thurman Small Group

7:00pm - Converge Young Adults

7:00pm - Men's Small Group

WEDNESDAY

5:30pm - Grief Group

6:30pm - *How to be an Antiracist* Small Group

FIRST CHURCH BIRMINGHAM STAFF

Senior Pastor: Stephanie York Arnold	Stephanie@firstchurchbhm.com
Pastor: Jonathan Goss.....	Jonathan@firstchurchbhm.com
Executive Pastor: Katie Gilbert.....	Katie@firstchurchbhm.com
Minister of Youth: Tiffany Dowdy	Tiffany@firstchurchbhm.com
Minister of Children & Church Events: Linda Underwood Thorne	Linda@firstchurchbhm.com
Organist: Richard Byrd	Richard@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: Cassandra Copeland.....	ELC@firstchurchbhm.com



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

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