

DECEMBER 2020

CONNECTIONS



WE ARE THE
DREAMERS

ADVENT SERMON SERIES

THOSE WHO DREAM

In this season's lectionary scriptures, the opening lines from Psalm 126 jumped off the page: "When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream." What does it look like to live as those who dream? The prophets, the psalmists, John the Baptist, Mary, Elizabeth, Joseph, Simeon, Anna, the shepherds and the Magi—they were all dreamers. They received, discovered, and responded to God's dreams for the world. In Advent, we step into the mystery and awe of God's dreams and pray they shape our reality. This theme is for the dreamers in all of us—those who dream of a deeper connection with God and those who dream of a better world. It's for those who dream of comfort and for those who have given up on their dreams. It's for those whose dreams have been crushed and for those who show us that dreams take time. Join us this Advent as we dream alongside prophets and angels, Mary and the Magi. Join us as we seek and sow God's dreams for our world.

November 29 | **Those who dream... keep awake**

MARK 13:24-37 | ISAIAH 64:1-9 | PSALM 80:1-7, 17-19

December 6 | **Those who dream... prepare the way**

MARK 1:1-8 | ISAIAH 40:1-11 | PSALM 85:1-2, 8-13

December 13 | **Those who dream... sow joy**

LUKE 1:46-55 | ISAIAH 61:1-4, 8-11 | PSALM 126

December 20 | **Those who dream... are not alone**

LUKE 1:26-45 | 2 SAMUEL 7:1-11, 16 | PSALM 89:1-4, 19-26

December 24 | **This night, we are those who dream**

LUKE 2:1-20 | ISAIAH 9:2-7

December 27 | **Those who dream... will not keep silent**

MARK 1:1-8 | ISAIAH 40:1-11 | PSALM 85:1-2, 8-13

January 3 | **Those who dream... persevere**

MATTHEW 2:1-12 | ISAIAH 60:1-6

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

WORSHIP CALENDAR

As we continue to navigate our way through a global pandemic we are preparing to offer additional ways for us to build connection and worship together. All of our virtual worship experiences will continue so that anyone needing as minimal risk as possible can have meaningful ways to worship. However, knowing how important sacred space is to many people during the holy season of Advent, we plan to additionally offer a few in-person worship opportunities.

Our services will be about 30 minutes in length. Masks will be required at all times and there will be no indoor congregational singing or congregational liturgy to minimize the spread of airborne droplets. We have made these decisions consulting others with greater experience and expertise in trying to minimize the risks for everyone. We encourage those in high risk categories to please continue worshipping with us online and not yet in person. Please see our Advent worship calendar below and click to sign up to join us for one of these special opportunities this season. (Please note: the calendar below is subject to change based upon our community's spread of COVID-19.)

NOVEMBER 29

11:00am - Loft & Sanctuary Worship Services Online

DECEMBER 21

6:00pm - Longest Night Communion Service
In-Person on the rooftop (*Virtual Option Available*)

[Sign Up **HERE**](#)

DECEMBER 6 *COMMUNION SUNDAY*

11:00am - Loft & Sanctuary Worship Services Online
6:00pm - Outdoor Christmas Movie Night

[Movie Night **Sign Up**](#)

DECEMBER 24

5:30pm - Christmas Eve Communion In-Person Worship
11:00pm - Christmas Eve Communion In-Person Worship

*A VIRTUAL OPTION WILL ALSO BE AVAILABLE AT 3:30PM
PLEASE REMEMBER YOU WILL BE ABLE TO WATCH THE VIRTUAL
STREAM AT ANY TIME FOLLOWING*

[5:30pm **SIGN UP**](#)

[11:00pm **SIGN UP**](#)

DECEMBER 13

11:00am - Loft & Sanctuary Worship Services Online
3:00pm - Loft & Sanctuary In-Person Worship

[Loft **SIGN UP**](#)

[Sanctuary **SIGN UP**](#)

DECEMBER 27

11:00am - Virtual Worship Led By Sanctuary Worship Team

DECEMBER 20

11:00am - Loft & Sanctuary Worship Services Online
3:00pm - Loft & Sanctuary In-Person Worship

[Loft **SIGN UP**](#)

[Sanctuary **SIGN UP**](#)

JANUARY 3

11:00am - Virtual Worship Led By Loft Worship Team



LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE

MONDAY, DECEMBER 21, 6:00PM

ONE OF OUR FIRST CHURCH TRADITIONS IN RECENT YEARS HAS BEEN TO HOST A LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE TO OFFER SPACE FOR THE GRIEF AND SADNESS THAT CAN OFTEN ACCOMPANY THE HOLIDAY SEASON. THIS YEAR WE PLAN TO OFFER THIS SPECIAL SERVICE ON THE ROOFTOP OF THE EDUCATION BUILDING ON THE EVENING OF THE WINTER SOLSTICE – THE LONGEST NIGHT OF OUR YEAR. WITH ALL THAT HAS COME TO US IN 2020, WE THINK IT IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER TO LEAN INTO OUR PRIORITY OF AUTHENTICITY BY PROVIDING SACRED SPACE TO NAME OUR GRIEF. AS WITH ALL OF OUR IN-PERSON SERVICES, REGISTRATION AND MASKS WILL BE REQUIRED. THE SPACE WILL BE SET TO PROVIDE FOR ADEQUATE SOCIAL DISTANCING. WE RECOGNIZE THAT MANY TIMES THE JOY AND EXPECTATION OF CHRISTMAS OVERSHADOW THE PAIN, GRIEF, AND HURT THAT WE ARE EXPERIENCING IN OUR LIVES. YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN US AS WE COME TOGETHER TO MARK OUR PAIN AND SORROW.

CLICK [HERE](#) TO REGISTER NOW.



**WACKY
TACKY**
Christmas

Outdoor
**MOVIE
NIGHT**

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6 AT 6:00 PM

The Halloween Outdoor Movie Night was such a big hit that we are holding a Christmas version! On Sunday, December 6, grab your tackiest Christmas sweater, costume, or Christmas mask and join the First Church family for the hilarious movie ELF on a 30 foot outdoor movie screen. Bring your chairs and soft drinks, we will provide popcorn and treats, and all will enjoy the awesome First Church community! The Fun Team will be greeting and taking temperatures. Masks and registration are required. You can register now by clicking [HERE](#).

THE MOVIE WILL BEGIN PROMPTLY AT 6:00PM.

COME EARLY TO CHECK IN, SET UP, AND GET YOUR TREATS!

CONTACT LINDA THORNE AT LINDA@FIRSTCHURCHBHM.COM FOR MORE INFORMATION.



Project 12/25 has had a strong start for this year. We have expanded our reach with new focuses to help build, support, and strengthen our community. Through your generous giving, we will be able to support families through purchasing gifts and food, support one of our community partners Magic City Acceptance Center with much-needed supplies, and support Urban Ministry through WE Build in the purchasing of a home! Thank you so much for how you have supported our community.

**WHILE WE HAVE HAD A GREAT START,
THE WORK IS NOT COMPLETE.**

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URBAN MINISTRY - WE BUILD

We are still collecting money for WE Build and the opportunity to help build generational wealth within the West End community. If you know someone who would resonate with this type of work, don't forget you can donate in honor or memory of someone you love. We will provide you with a card so that you can share this meaningful work with someone else.

TO SUPPORT URBAN MINISTRY'S WE BUILD WITH THE PURCHASING OF A HOME, CLICK **HERE**

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MAGIC CITY ACCEPTANCE CENTER

One of our community partners is Magic City Acceptance Center. They strive to create a safe and affirming space for LGBTQAI+ individuals of all ages. We believe the amazing work that they are doing within the LGBTQAI+ community aligns with our calling to be an OPEN place for ALL.

To support Magic City Acceptance Center with the purchasing of much-needed supplies, click **HERE**. If you chose to support Magic City Acceptance Center, please let us know. We would love to celebrate your generous giving.

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FIRST CHURCH FAMILY - FOOD & CHRISTMAS GIFTS

The people within our community are of the utmost importance to us. Just like in years past, we have collected the names of individuals and families who have shared that they are in need of additional support this Christmas season. We are still in need of support for families. If you wish to help with the purchasing of gifts and groceries, please email Tiffany at tiffany@firstchurchbhm.com.

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ANY ASPECT OF PROJECT 12.25
PLEASE EMAIL TIFFANY AT TIFFANY@FIRSTCHURCHBHM.COM**

ADVENT

SMALL GROUP

This Advent season you are invited to join us for a small group based on our lectionary texts each week. You will be led through Scripture and discussion by a variety of different voices in our community to help you engage and experience Advent in a meaningful way. We will meet on Wednesday evenings for 4 weeks in the month of December from 6:00pm – 7:00pm via Zoom. We hope you will make plans to join us in the journey toward Christmas. Register to join us by clicking **HERE**.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2

Rev. Sarah Smoot, Co-Pastor at Church of the Reconciler

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9

Allison Dearing, Executive Director at One Place

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16

Rev. Rick Owen, Central District Superintendent

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 23

Rev. Charles Alexander, Retired Clergy

STUDENT MINISTRY

AT FIRST CHURCH

AMONG US

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6

5:30PM - 7:30PM

FIRST CHURCH

REGISTRATION & MASK REQUIRED



Join us for our real-life version of the popular game, Among Us! Open to all 6th-12th graders. Registration and mask required for all participants. Dinner provided.

REGISTER [**HERE**](#)

STUDENT MINISTRY SCHEDULE

ALL MEETINGS: 5:30PM-7:30PM IN THE YOUTH ROOM AT FIRST CHURCH

DECEMBER 6
AMONG US

DECEMBER 20
YOUTH CHRISTMAS PARTY

DECEMBER 13
YOUTH

DECEMBER 27
NO YOUTH

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ANYTHING RELATED TO STUDENT MINISTRY,
REACH OUT TO TIFFANY DOWDY AT TIFFANY@FIRSTCHURCHBHM.COM.



As we approach a season in which many of us will plan to do our shopping online, we want to make sure you are aware that First Church has an Amazon Smile account. When you make a purchase through Amazon Smile 0.5% of that purchase is donated to the charity of your choice. All you need to do is make sure you are shopping at smile.amazon.com (all of the regular Amazon products and prices can be found there) and select Birmingham First United Methodist Church as your charity of choice. We hope you will consider using Amazon Smile as an easy way to make a contribution to First Church!

NEW MEMBER PRAYERS FOR FIRST CHURCH

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

We pray that First Church may be a space of healing for all and that we may continue to build a stronger community in Birmingham, Alabama, our nation, and our world.

- Paul and Rebecca Klamert



GIFTS RECEIVED BY THE CHURCH

TO THE MEMORIAL FUND

In Memory of Buddy Ramsey

From Geneva Blackburn
From Sarah Whiteside
From Sam & Peggy Heide

In Memory of Terilane Ramsey

From Henry & Marion Lagman
From John & Betty McMahan
From Joe & Jenny Walker

In Memory of Mary Beth Prude

From Henry & Marion Lagman

In Memory of Betty Houston

From Henry & Marion Lagman

In Memory of Hope Arnold

From Henry & Marion Lagman

In Memory of June McAfee

From Henry & Marion Lagman

In Memory of Marie Saunders

From Anne Cain, Fran Early, Jenny Walker, Jennifer Waters, Jill Rogers, Lindsay Pitts, & Stephanie Rothoff

In Memory of Sara Clark

From Wallace & Glendacile Lyons

TO THE MUSIC FUND

In Memory of Betty Houston

From Larry Ward

In Memory of Nancy Wingard

From Sam & Peggy Heide

DECEMBER CALENDAR

DECEMBER 1

6:00pm - SPRC

DECEMBER 14

6:00pm - Executive Council

DECEMBER 24

~ Church Office Closed ~

3:30pm - Virtual Christmas Eve Service

5:30pm - In Person Christmas Eve Service

11:00pm - In Person Christmas Eve Service

DECEMBER 16

6:00pm - Trustees

DECEMBER 6

4:00pm - Children's Christmas Parties

6:00pm - Movie Night

DECEMBER 20

3:00pm - Advent In-Person Worship

DECEMBER 25

~ Church Office Closed ~

DECEMBER 13

3:00pm - Advent In-Person Worship

DECEMBER 21

6:00pm - Longest Night Service

DECEMBER 31

~ Church Office Closed ~

WEEKLY CALENDAR

SUNDAY

9:00am - Preschool Bitmoji Classroom Email

10:00am - Elementary Sunday School (Zoom)

11:00am - Loft & Sanctuary Online Worship

5:30pm - Youth Group

TUESDAY

7:00pm - Converge Young Adults

WEDNESDAY

6:00pm - Advent Small Group

6:30pm - Chancel Choir

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 & Social Justice Engagement: 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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