

CONNECTIONS



FAT TUESDAY
AT FIRST CHURCH BIRMINGHAM
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16

ALLEN FAMILY
AVENUES
BIRMINGHAM AL 35212

A LENTEN JOURNEY

Fat Tuesday/Mardi Gras – February 16

- Shrove Tuesday – Funfetti Pancakes
- Mardi Gras – Mask craft & bead necklace

As we prepare to kick off the season of Lent you are invited to make Funfetti pancakes, create a Mardi Gras mask and wear your beads! Celebrate Fat Tuesday virtually with your church family on February 16 – sign up at www.firstchurchbhm.com under the coming up tab to receive the zoom link.

MOVING THROUGH LENT



In Lent, we're reminded that, again and again, suffering and brokenness find us. We doubt again, we lament again, we mess up again. Again and again, the story of Jesus on the cross repeats—every time lives are taken unjustly, every time the powerful choose corruption and violence, every time individuals forget how to love. With exacerbation we exclaim, "Again?! How long, O God?" And yet, in the midst of the chaos of our lives, God offers a sacred refrain: "I choose you, I love you, I will lead you to repair." Again and again, God breaks the cycle and offers us a new way forward.

In this season we will embrace ritual to help us remember and be transformed. Again and again we will come to God with our prayers, our dreams, our hopes, and our doubts. This embodied practice will help us build muscle memory. The repetition will help to retrain our neural pathways. We need these 46 days of Lent because this season shapes us into more faithful disciples. Join us this Lent as again and again, we bring all of who we are to God and trust that God will meet us, time and again, along the way.

3.7 - THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

WE ARE SHOWN THE WAY

John 2:13-22 | 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

3.14 - THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

GOD LOVES FIRST

John 3:14-21 | Ephesians 2:1-10

3.21 - THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

WE ARE REFORMED

John 12:20-33 | Jeremiah 31:31-34

3.28 - PALM SUNDAY

WE DRAW ON COURAGE

John 12:1-19

4.4 - EASTER SUNDAY

THE SUN RISES

Mark 16:1-8

LENTEN LUNCHTIME

L

LIVE

TUESDAYS AT 12:00PM

WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/FIRSTCHURCHBIRMINGHAM

Each Tuesday at 12:00pm during Lent you are invited to join us on Facebook for an interactive time of connection and creativity. During each segment you will be offered instruction on how to make a creative expression of your faith during your Lenten journey. If you can't tune in at 12:00pm feel free to watch these Lunchtime Live segments later at your convenience.

See the schedule below:

3.2.21 - HOW TO MAKE PALM CROSSES

3.9.21 - HOW TO MAKE EASTER PRETZELS

3.16.21 - HOW TO MAKE HOT CROSS BUNS

3.23.21 - HOW TO MAKE CASCARONES OR CONFETTI EGGS

3.30.21 - HOW TO MAKE A FLOWER CROSS AT HOME

Celebrating **Little Easters**

Lent is the 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter. If you count the days on your calendar, you will find more than 40 because Lent excludes Sundays. Christians consider every Sunday a celebration of the Resurrection. As a part of our journey this year, we are encouraging you to practice "little Easters" on one day of each weekend during Lent. On these days we pause our fasting and celebrate Christ's gift of love for us. Using practices from around the world, we have collected a list to inspire you to a bit of fun and celebration. All of our ideas are shared below so that you can plan ahead. In addition, we will post these practices to Facebook and Instagram each Saturday during the Lenten season. We hope you will share pictures and stories of the ways that you find "little Easters" in your midst.

MARCH 6-7 | HAVE AN OMELET FEAST

Celebrate like they do in the French village of Bessières with an omelet feast of your own.

MARCH 13-14 | FLY A KITE

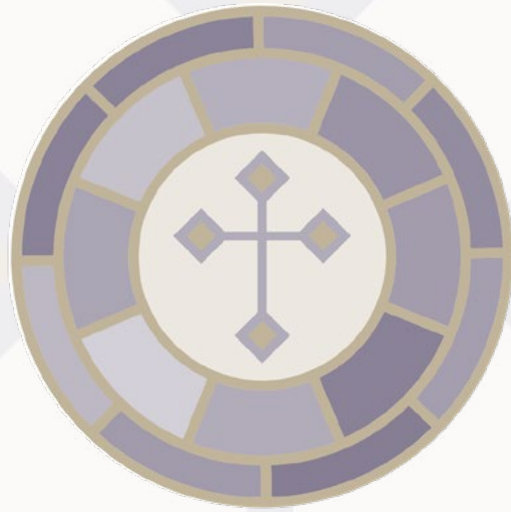
Make your own kite or buy one in a store but get outside and release your inner child.

MARCH 20-21 | DYE EASTER EGGS

Buy a kit and dye your own Easter eggs or get creative and make homemade egg dyes.

MARCH 27-28 | HAVE A PICNIC

Pack up your blanket and favorite foods and take them outside to enjoy.



STATIONS OF THE CROSS

During the 3 week span from **MONDAY, MARCH 15 THROUGH FRIDAY, APRIL 2** you will have the opportunity to come to First Church and move through the Stations of the Cross. These stations have been created by the staff and lay persons at First Church to help us move alongside our Lenten theme of "Again & Again: A Lenten Refrain." Each station will invite you to reflect on both the historical and modern contexts while also considering traditional Stations of the Cross scripture. While we know that Easter is coming, this experience is intentionally created to help us sit with the loss and grief that comes before celebration. The stations will be placed under the covered walkway throughout our courtyard and can be experienced at your convenience during those three weeks. We encourage you to make the most of this experience by turning your phones to silent and being fully present. We hope this practice will enhance your experience this Lenten season.

MAUNDY THURSDAY

THURSDAY, APRIL 1, 6:00PM

You are invited to gather around your table at home as we break bread while remembering Maundy Thursday. As we did last year, we will offer a live streamed virtual service around the table at 6:00pm on Thursday, April 1. You are invited (if you are comfortable) to include those you feel safe to share a meal with (outside is preferable) and allow this time to be reminiscent of the early church gatherings in homes celebrating the Lord's Supper. Our live stream will instruct you as you journey throughout the meal. We encourage you to make plans to adorn your table with meaningful place settings as well as foods that help you honor those you love and long to be with more fully. We will provide you with recipes for making your own communion bread prior to the service or you can simply grab some at the grocery store. We hope you will join us around the table as we remember together.

GOOD FRIDAY

Friday, April 2 at 12:00pm

You are invited to join us for a virtual Tenebrae service on Good Friday, April 2 at 12:00pm 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 play between light and dark we will remember what it must have felt like in those moments when Christ’s death darkened the world. We invite you to tune in via livestream as we remember the grief and loss of Good Friday.

Easter Baskets

BY **COMMUNITY ON THE RISE**

You are invited to purchase an Easter Basket of goodies that are brought to you by Community on the Rise for \$25. Each Easter Basket will offer you a: ‘Stillness’ oil (blended by our friends at COTRise), an herbal flavored tea bag to help quiet the soul, a mindfulness teacup and saucer, a packet of seeds for planting in your garden as we anticipate the earth springing to life this new season, a set of ten ‘Cosmos’ note cards painted by COTRise community member Derrick Binion, and a pottery hand cross by Old Ridge Pottery. Just like the Advent Boxes, these beautiful Easter Baskets will benefit Community on the Rise as they work to house, employ, educate, and heal those experiencing homelessness in Birmingham. Place your order [HERE](#). Baskets will be picked up at Community on the Rise the week before Easter and you will receive instructions after placing your order.



COME HANG WITH YOUR
FIRST CHURCH
PEEPS

Your family will have two fun Easter activity options.

OPTION #1 - EASTER EGG HUNT – MARCH 28, 2021

You are invited to join your First Church Family, Sunday, March 28 from 3:30 until 4:30 pm for our annual Easter Egg Hunt! Bring your Easter baskets, lawn chairs, and a blanket, and First Church will provide the eggs, treats, games, and fluffy bunnies to pet! All activities will be based on social distancing and safety precautions.

Your family will also have two Lenten opportunities at the Egg Hunt:

1. Bring your "Giving Box" from our Lenten activity of collecting items for Glen Iris Grace. Your items will be delivered to the Carolyn Pitts Sunday School class for packaging and delivery.
2. Pick up your child's Holy Week Bag created just for you!

Make sure to mark this time on your calendar for a safe and fun Easter Egg Hunt.

Location: Trinity UMC West Homewood Campus

Needed: Volunteer bunnies to stuff eggs and help out at the Egg Hunt
(If you are interested in volunteering contact Linda Thorne at Linda@firstchurchbhm.com)

Click [HERE](#) to register to join us for the Easter Egg Hunt.
Please be sure to register everyone who plans to attend.

OPTION #2 – "I'VE BEEN EGGED"

Simply sign up at [HERE](#) to be paired with a First Church family in your neighborhood. When you sign up, you will receive instructions on how to "egg a friend." The basic idea is to purchase plastic eggs, stuff with treats, and secretly hide them in your partner's yard!

Join us! It will be great fun to surprise your First Church neighbor kids!

FIRST CHURCH

SUMMER CAMP

SAVE THE DATES

Preschool Summer Mini Camp | JUNE 26

Plan to spend a Saturday morning having fun with your church friends in a socially distanced in-person environment. Games, interactive Bible time, art, and so much more! Enrollment will be limited to provide for smaller class groups. (available for ages 2 through Kindergarten)

City Kids Camp | JULY 19-23

Join your First Church friends for a mighty, mini-Arts Camp. The same great fun as our traditional Arts Camp, but with smaller groups of your First Church family. Games, Percussion, Interactive Bible Time, Art and so much more! Enrollment space will be limited to provide for smaller class groups. (1st – 5th grade)



JUSTICE & MERCY

MINISTRIES

As a church family, we deeply desire to live into the calling to love all people. As part of our desire to love all, we have made a commitment to do justice and financially support 501c3 non-profit organizations that are actively working towards a more just world. Here are the organizations that we have committed to support with our budget.

Alabama Arise
Alabama Interfaith Refugee Partnership
Bread for The World
Church of The Reconciler
Community Church Without Walls
Community On The Rise
Faith In Action Alabama
Magic City Acceptance Center
One Place Family Justice Center
Reconciling Ministries Network
Urban Ministry

Financially supporting organizations is only one aspect of how we believe we are invited to live out our calling. We hope to continue to provide opportunities for our church community to serve, such as Project 12/25, and connect with community organizations that are leading meaningful work.

To ensure that we are fully living into our priority of doing justice, we will be creating a Justice and Mercy Leadership Team. The goal of this team is to help discern, guide, and lead our church into a deeper understanding of what it means to do justice while living out our authentic faith. If you are interested in learning how to get connected with one of our community partners or learning more about our Justice and Mercy Team, please email Tiffany at tiffany@firstchurchbhm.com for more information.

Justice and Mercy Leadership Meeting: March 14, 9:30am via Zoom.

STUDENT MINISTRY

AT FIRST CHURCH

In March we will begin a new series: **Lost and Found**. We will be focusing on how Jesus reminds us constantly of how much we are valued, seen, and loved. We will be reflecting upon the parables of Christ to glean some new information about our true identity, God's beloved.

SCHEDULE

March 7 | March 14

March 21 | March 28

STAY IN TOUCH

ADULTS – TEXT: @FCBHMAADULT TO: 81010

STUDENTS – TEXT: @FCBHMYOUTH TO:81010

ADULT VOLUNTEERS – TEXT: @FCBHMSERVE TO: 81010

INSTAGRAM – @FIRSTCHURCHBHM.YOUTH

FACEBOOK – FIRST CHURCH BIRMINGHAM – YOUTH GROUP

FIRST CHURCH CLEAN-UP DAY

SATURDAY, MARCH 6, 8:00AM - 12:00PM

Over the course of the last year, there have been many projects and renovations at First Church. Sunday School classes have had floors replaced and our Youth Room is getting a long-needed makeover. Along with all of these projects has come a lot of stuff that needs to be cleaned up and thrown out. On Saturday, March 6 from 8:00 am – 12:00pm we are asking for volunteers to come and help us clean out our spaces. We will ask volunteers to wear masks and plan on assigning folks to workspaces that will allow for social distancing. Please let us know if you are able to attend by clicking [HERE](#). Thank you in advance for helping us keep First Church looking beautiful.

NEW MEMBER PRAYERS FOR FIRST CHURCH

AS WE SEEK TO BE

AN OPEN PLACE FOR ALL

MY PRAYER FOR FIRST CHURCH IS:

To continue the work of the Lord.

That the Lords' blessings and peace be on all that enter.

- Carole and Joy Voran



MARCH CALENDAR

MARCH 2

12:00pm - Lunchtime Live

MARCH 9

12:00pm - Lunchtime Live

MARCH 23

12:00pm - Lunchtime Live

MARCH 6

8:00am - Clean Up Day

MARCH 15

~ Stations of The Cross Begins ~

MARCH 28

3:30pm - Easter Egg Hunt

MARCH 16

12:00pm - Lunchtime Live

MARCH 8

6:00pm - Executive Council

MARCH 17

6:00pm - Trustees

MARCH 30

12:00pm - Lunchtime Live

WEEKLY CALENDAR

SUNDAY

9:00am - Preschool Bitmoji Classroom Email

10:00am - Elementary Sunday School (Zoom)

11:00am - Loft & Sanctuary Online Worship

2:00pm - Youth Group

TUESDAY

7:00pm - Converge Young Adults

WEDNESDAY

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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