

APRIL 2021

# CONNECTIONS

NEW LIFE BURSTS  
**FORTH**

# Easter

AT FIRST CHURCH

**7:30am - Sunrise Service**  
*(Outside in the Courtyard)*

**9:00am - Live Stream (COMBINED VIRTUAL WORSHIP EXPERIENCE )**  
*(This service can be viewed during the livestream with staff interaction or anytime thereafter.)*

**9:00am - Loft & Sanctuary Services**  
*(In-person in their worship spaces)*

**11:00am - Loft & Sanctuary Services**  
*(In-person in their worship spaces)*



# EASTER FLOWERCROSS

If you plan to attend any of our in-person worship services on Easter Sunday, April 4, don't forget to bring flowers to put on our courtyard Easter Cross. Flowers can be from your home or garden (or even the grocery store!). This is a great tradition that we look forward to continuing this year as we celebrate Easter together. As you put your flowers on the cross or take pictures please be mindful to maintain social distance for the safety of others.

# RESUMING IN-PERSON WORSHIP

We are excited to begin resuming modified in-person worship on Easter Sunday, April 4 (as long as there isn't a dramatic increase in COVID cases). This decision has been carefully and prayerfully reached after discussions with numerous medical professionals within our church, our staff, lay leadership, and musicians, reviewing our church-wide survey (in which around 200 persons shared their preferences), the North Alabama Conference, and other local congregations.

Below is our "new normal" schedule for modified worship at First Church:  
(Sign up [HERE](#) for in-person worship)

## POST-EASTER SUNDAY SCHEDULE

### **9:00am – LIVE STREAM COMBINED VIRTUAL WORSHIP EXPERIENCE**

*(This service can be viewed during the livestream with staff interaction or anytime thereafter.)*

### **11:00am – LOFT & SANCTUARY SERVICES**

*In-person in their worship spaces*

At this time, all in-person experiences at First Church will involve remaining masked while inside our buildings at ALL times regardless of whether or not you have been fully vaccinated. (First Church will continue to require masks even when the state mandate lifts on April 9, 2021.) We will also practice social distancing, not offer congregational singing or speaking in worship, and ask everyone to register for worship. We will begin with shortened in-person worship services, but will not yet include in-person Sunday School or nursery care. We look forward to adding these and other elements of Sunday mornings in the coming months. Please review our [FAQ's](#) as this will offer you needed information to better your experience when attending in-person activities at First Church.

While we will be adjusting to doing things differently than we used to do them – it is wonderful to gather together again for worship in-person on the corner of 19th and 6th while still providing excellent virtual worship.

Don't forget to sign up [HERE](#) for in-person worship beginning Easter Sunday, April 4.

# LEARNING FROM INDIGENOUS WISDOM

When was the last time you stopped to listen to the trees or consider the plants growing all around you each day? For many of us creation speaks in a way that words cannot convey and yet we are living in a time of global climate crisis when the destruction of natural habitats and plants and animals is happening right before our eyes. In addition, we are squatters on land that was originally inhabited by indigenous communities who carefully cared and tended the land. We have lost touch with the ways that native peoples understood their relationship and responsibility to the earth. Using *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teaching of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer as our guide, our April Sermon Series will seek to help us learn a different way of being in relationship with creation. How should we understand our relationship to the world around us? What does it mean to live in a reciprocal relationship? And, finally, what steps can we begin to take to restore our broken world?

April 11 – Week 1 | **RELATIONSHIP**

*Genesis 1:1-38, Psalm 104:1-9*

April 18 – Week 2 | **RECIPROCITY**

*Matthew 6:25-34, Job 12:7-10, Psalm 104:10-23*

April 25 – Week 3 | **RESTORATION**

*Revelation 22:1-7, Psalm 104: 24-35*



# POP UP PICNIC

**SUNDAY, MAY 2, 12:00PM AT RAILROAD PARK**

The First Church Fun Team invites you to join your church friends at Railroad Park! Grab a picnic lunch and blanket or chair and join us at Railroad Park on Sunday, May 2 immediately following worship. We will Pop Up and meet at the park to enjoy the wonderful spring weather! We will gather on the grassy area next to the 17th Street Plaza. Click **HERE** for a map of Railroad Park.

The Fun Team will be there with coolers of bottled water for everyone. You can pack your own picnic OR stop by your favorite downtown restaurant and grab lunch on the way. Don't miss out on this fun day at the park!

**Questions: Contact Linda Thorne – [Linda@firstchurchbhm.com](mailto:Linda@firstchurchbhm.com)**



**HOMEBOUND  
COMMUNITY**  
AT FIRST CHURCH

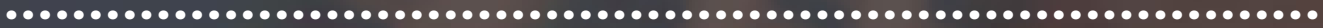
We believe that all are welcome here at First Church. One of the most important things we can do as a church family is to continually welcome our homebound members even though they may not be able to meet with us in-person. First Church has a wonderful and dedicated group of folks that go out of their way to care for our homebound community.

As part of this ongoing care, we would like you all to let us know if you would like to be added to our homebound list. You would start to receive care and cards from our team that works tirelessly to let you know that you are welcome here at First Church. If you would like to be added to this list please email Jonathan at [Jonathan@firstchurchbhm.com](mailto:Jonathan@firstchurchbhm.com)

# SMALL GROUP OPPORTUNITIES

One of the best ways to build connection with one another is through participating and learning together in small groups. As we move into the Spring, we have 3 new opportunities for you to participate in small groups. Click **HERE** to register now.

In addition, we want to remind you that many of our Sunday School classes have moved to a virtual format in this season and are continuing to meet each and every week. For a complete list of our virtual Sunday School opportunities and who to contact, please click **HERE**.



## **Faith After Doubt**

TUESDAYS FOR 6 WEEKS BEGINNING APRIL 13, 6:30PM – 8:00PM

Led by Art & Carie Wimberley

*Faith After Doubt* is for those of us who feel as if our faith – or some important aspect of it – is falling apart and we are fighting the urge to put it back together in the same old way. Author Brian D. McLaren, a former pastor and now a speaker and activist, shows how old assumptions are being challenged in nearly every area of human life, not just theology and spirituality. Join Art and Carie Wimberly, who have been attending First Church for the last year, to discuss a path of faith development in which questions and doubt are not the enemy of faith, but rather a portal to a more mature and fruitful kind of faith.



# The Hope of Christian Community and How to Move Toward It

THURSDAY, APRIL 8, 6:00PM

Led by Dr. Stewart A. Jackson

Racial tension, political polarization and the lure of autocratic leadership is an ambient reality for our country right now. Sadly, our country and world has been in this situation before. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a Lutheran pastor/theologian who took a stand against the government of Germany in the 1930's and 40s. His experience and thinking on what it means to be in Christian community during a time of political upheaval is instructive for our current day. What does it mean to be the church now? Join us for a 25 min glimpse at Bonhoeffer's book, *Life Together* with Dr. Stewart A. Jackson.



## Book Discussion Group

***Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teaching of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer**

WEDNESDAYS FOR 3 WEEKS BEGINNING APRIL 14, 6:00PM – 7:00PM

Led by Stephanie York Arnold (in-person) and Katie Gilbert (virtual)

Using *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teaching of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer as our guide, we will follow our April sermon series based upon the same book as we seek to learn a different way of being in relationship with creation. We will learn and discuss the wisdom of indigenous communities as we study our relationship with creation, reciprocity or mutuality with creation, and then, finally, restoration within creation. We recommend reading the whole book if possible but will also narrow down particular chapters to read or review before each week's study.

You can choose your preference to participate in a virtual discussion group facilitated by Rev. Katie Gilbert or an outside in-person discussion group facilitated by Rev. Stephanie York Arnold on her back deck.

# MY OOPS...



# GOD'S ART

## CITY KIDS ARTS CAMP 2021

Arts Camp will take on a different look and feel for 2021 as we reduce the number of attendees in order to practice safe distancing in our classrooms.

### WHAT IS CITY KIDS ARTS CAMP?

My Oops...God's Art, will be an action-packed week filled with art, dancing, drumming, interactive Bible stories, games and FUN! It will be a time to share God's love and build community with each other as well as embrace God's grace in our lives. Our children will learn that when you think you've made an "oops" it can be turned into something beautiful!

### WHEN IS CITY KIDS ARTS CAMP?

Monday, July 19 – Friday, July 23 from 9:00am – 1:00pm

### WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR CITY KIDS ARTS CAMP?

Children who have completed Kindergarten – 4th grade.

### HOW MUCH DOES CITY KIDS ARTS CAMP COST?

\$50.00 per Camper | Scholarships available (*cost includes camp t-shirt and daily lunch*)

### REGISTRATION

Space is limited for campers so register your child now by clicking **HERE**. Youth & Adult Volunteers are asked to register online **HERE** and let us know where you prefer to serve. You will also have the opportunity to purchase a camp t-shirt.

### DONATIONS

If you would like to make a monetary donation, please click **HERE** to 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. The Friday of camp will be specially designed to celebrate the week with various activities and a time to video what we have learned in order for us to be able to share with parents and the congregation.

**For more information, please contact Linda Thorne at [Linda@firstchurchbhm.com](mailto:Linda@firstchurchbhm.com)**





## **"GOD MADE ME AND EVERYTHING I SEE!"**

Plan to spend Saturday morning, **June 26**, having fun with your First Church friends in a socially distanced in-person environment. Interactive Bible time, games, art, creative movement, and fun! Enrollment will be limited to provide for smaller class groups.

### **WHAT IS A MINICAMP FOR PRESCHOOLERS?**

A one-morning minicamp just for preschoolers with age-appropriate Bible Story, games, creative movement, art, and snack.

### **WHEN IS THE MINICAMP FOR PRESCHOOLERS?**

Saturday, June 26, 2021 from 9:00am – 11:30 am

### **WHO IS ELIGIBLE MINICAMP FOR PRESCHOOLERS?**

Children ages 2 through 5 years old

### **HOW MUCH DOES THE MINICAMP FOR PRESCHOOLERS COST?**

\$10.00 per child (t-shirt and snack included)

### **REGISTRATION**

Space for campers is limited so register now by clicking **HERE**. Youth & Adult Volunteers are asked to register online **HERE** and let us know where you prefer to serve.

You will also have the opportunity to purchase a camp t-shirt.

For more information, please contact Linda Thorne at [Linda@firstchurchbhm.com](mailto:Linda@firstchurchbhm.com)

# STUDENT MINISTRY

AT FIRST CHURCH

## WHAT WE'RE LEARNING:

Easter is the day we celebrate Jesus rising from the dead, but let's be honest — that's not always easy to believe. How does someone just stop being dead? Are we sure it happened? What if it didn't? And if it did, so what? What does it have to do with our lives today? Well, it turns out we're not the only ones who've asked questions like this. When Jesus died, even His closest friends and followers had questions, fears, and doubts. In this 2-week series, we'll see how Jesus shared the good news with His friends that He really was alive, and that nothing (not even death) could separate them from God's love — not ever. The same is true for us today and forever. Because the love of Jesus is bigger than our doubts and gives us hope.

## SCHEDULE

4.4.21 - **NO YOUTH**

4.11.21 - **YOUTH**

4.17.21 - **KAYAK TRIP**

4.18.21 - **YOUTH**

4.25.21 - **YOUTH DAY OF SERVICE**

5.6.21 - **CONFIRMATION SUNDAY**

## SUMMER DATES

June 6-12 | **MYSTERY TRIP**

July 5-9 | **SUMMER SERVE WEEK**

July 15-17 | **MINI BEACH WEEKEND**

## STAY IN TOUCH

Keep up to date with all that we have going on  
and never miss out on all the fun things happening.

**ADULTS - TEXT: @FCBHMADULT TO: 81010**

**STUDENTS - TEXT: @FCBHMAYOUTH TO: 81010**

**ADULT VOLUNTEERS - TEXT: @FCBHMSERVE TO: 81010**

**INSTAGRAM - @FIRSTCHURCHBHM.YOUTH**

**FACEBOOK - FIRST CHURCH BIRMINGHAM - YOUTH GROUP**

# APRIL CALENDAR

## APRIL 1

6:00pm - Maundy Thursday Service

## APRIL 11

~ Begin Post Easter Worship Schedule ~

## APRIL 12

6:00pm - Executive Council

## APRIL 2

12:00pm - Good Friday Service

## APRIL 4

~ Easter Sunday ~  
~ Resume In Person ~

## APRIL 21

6:00pm - Trustees

# WEEKLY CALENDAR

## SUNDAY

9:00am - Preschool Bitmoji Classroom Email

9:00am - Virtual Live Stream Service

10:00am - Elementary Sunday School (Zoom)

11:00am - Loft & Sanctuary In Person Worship

4:00pm - Youth Group

## TUESDAY

7:00pm - Converge Young Adults

## WEDNESDAY

6:30pm - Chancel Choir

# FIRST CHURCH BIRMINGHAM STAFF

YOU MAY REACH OUR STAFF AT 205-254-3186 OR BY EMAIL

<b>Senior Pastor:</b> Stephanie York Arnold .....	Stephanie@firstchurchbhm.com
<b>Pastor:</b> Jonathan Goss.....	Jonathan@firstchurchbhm.com
<b>Executive Pastor:</b> Katie Gilbert.....	Katie@firstchurchbhm.com
<b>Minister of Youth &amp; Social Justice Engagement:</b> Tiffany Dowdy.....	Tiffany@firstchurchbhm.com
<b>Minister of Children &amp; Church Events:</b> Linda Underwood Thorne .....	Linda@firstchurchbhm.com
<b>Organist:</b> Richard Byrd.....	Richard@firstchurchbhm.com
<b>Design:</b> Blake Hobbs.....	Blake@firstchurchbhm.com
<b>Choir Director:</b> Patrick Evans.....	Patrick@firstchurchbhm.com
<b>Loft Worship Leader:</b> Katherine Mullen .....	Katherine@firstchurchbhm.com
<b>Office Administrator:</b> Peg Thompson .....	Peg@firstchurchbhm.com
<b>Business Administrator:</b> Steve Pitts.....	Steve@firstchurchbhm.com
<b>Maintenance Supervisor:</b> Ron Dates.....	Ron@firstchurchbhm.com
<b>Nursery Director:</b> Ginger Gambill .....	Ginger@firstchurchbhm.com
<b>Wedding Director:</b> Betsy Pate .....	Betsy@firstchurchbhm.com
<b>Executive Director of Early Learning Center:</b> Cassandra Copeland.....	ELC@firstchurchbhm.com



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

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