

# CONNECTIONS

**CELEBRATING  
GOD IS LOVE**





# PRIDE

TWENTY TWENTYONE

Without a parade to march in, we know our Pride participation in 2021 will look different from years past. However, we are still looking forward to celebrating our LGBTQ community in a variety of the many ways being offered by Central Alabama Pride. We hope you will mark your calendars and join us for one or both of the opportunities listed below.

## Pridefest

SATURDAY, JUNE 12 AT 5:00PM

Running in conjunction with Avondale entertainment district's "Eat in the Streets," Pridefest 2021 will take place on Saturday, June 12 from 12:00pm – 7:00pm. This will be a family friendly festival that will provide an opportunity to come together for a day of love and celebration accompanied by live entertainment, drag, food and drinks, vendors, and Pride for the entire family!

You are invited to wear your God is Love t-shirt and meet us at 5:00pm between Saturn and Avondale Brewery to enjoy dinner together. We hope you'll join us as we support our LGBTQ community and share our message of God's inclusive love.

SATURDAY. JUNE 19

# PRIDE!

AT GHOST TRAIN BREWING COMPANY

In addition to Pridefest, we will gather on Saturday evening June 19 at Ghost Train Brewing Company for Pride night. This will be a chance to grab a drink (*Ghost Train will also have non-alcoholic beverages available*), gather in good company, and celebrate our LGBTQ community. You will be invited to once again wear your God is Love t-shirt. We hope you'll come and join us!

## GOD IS LOVE SHIRTS



GOD IS LOVE

FIRST CHURCH BIRMINGHAM

We are currently selling another round of our God is Love t-shirts. This year we are offering a redesign which features a softer cotton blend shirt and a more neutral color. Shirts are \$25.00 each and are available in adult small through 4XL. All proceeds from the sale of shirts will go towards covering the costs associated with our participation in Pride this year and in years to come. Sizing availability will be first come first serve so don't hesitate to buy your shirts today. You can make your purchase [HERE](#) or by contacting Katie Gilbert at [Katie@firstchurch-bhm.com](mailto:Katie@firstchurch-bhm.com). You will receive an email with more details about t-shirt pick up after placing your order.

# UPDATES TO FIRST CHURCH PANDEMIC PROTOCOL

Our staff and lay leadership have been working hard to make decisions that are wise, grounded in science, and contextual when considering what protocols are needed as we continue to move forward. Given the high percentage of vaccinated individuals at First Church, the CDC's new guidelines, and the federal and state governments regularly increasing vaccine eligibility, we want to outline the ways we will be lessening restrictions while striving to maintain our safety and health.

- We will continue to wear masks for worship and follow social distancing.
- While still practicing social distancing and wearing of masks, we will begin inviting the congregation to join together in spoken word and singing.
- Beginning June 6, we will no longer require worshippers to make a reservation before attending worship. We will be looking at creative ways to take attendance when you arrive but you will no longer need to make a reservation.
- Beginning June 6, we will offer a nursery (infants through Kindergarten) during worship. See Nursery Care update for further information.
- We are looking to resume in-person Sunday school beginning August 15. We recognize that in-person Sunday School works best when we can safely offer classes for children, youth, and adults. It is our hope that by mid-August many children and youth will have had the opportunity to be vaccinated as eligibility continues to increase which will make these opportunities much safer. At this time, we are working to renovate our youth space and finish our technology upgrade to make it possible for classes to offer both in-person and virtual options if they desire.

## FIRST CHURCH NURSERY CARE

Nursery care during our 11:00am worship services will begin on Sunday, June 6 for infants through Kindergarten. We ask that you make a reservation **HERE** for your child so that we can adequately prepare our workers and rooms. *(Though we will not turn children away who have not made a reservation.)* Our nursery workers will be fully vaccinated and are excited to spend time once again showering our children with loving attention. If you have any questions, please reach out to Ginger Gambill at [Ginger@firstchurchbhm.com](mailto:Ginger@firstchurchbhm.com).



# WHERE WAS GOD WHEN...

Have you ever wondered where God is in the midst of incredibly difficult circumstances? Have you ever heard someone try to explain pain and struggle by saying it was "God's will"? Experiences of suffering, questions of evil and wondering what God controls are often some of the most challenging aspects of faith for all of us. While we don't expect to be able to give answers to these important questions, we will seek the Spirit's loving wisdom as we contextualize scripture and ponder together where God might be in the midst of our questions.

## June 6 | **GOD'S WILL**

DEUTERONOMY 3:3-7, NUMBERS 31:7-18, ROMANS 12:1-4, 9-10, 14-16A, MATTHEW 22:36-40

*Rev. Emily Nelms Chastain preaches in Sanctuary*

## June 13 | **THE PROBLEM OF EVIL**

ISAIAH 45: 1-7, JUDGES 19:22-29, ROMANS 12: 17-21, MATTHEW 22:36-40

# JULY 4 WORSHIP

This year we will be offering a combined 4th of July worship experience that will be virtual. We recognize that many will be traveling this holiday after more than a year of vacations being postponed. Therefore, we are choosing to offer our community a virtual experience that can be accessed no matter where you located or what time is most convenient for you. The service will be streamed at 9:00am on Sunday, July 4 on Facebook and YouTube.

***There will be no in-person worship this Sunday.***

# 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 – 5th 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.

FIRST CHURCH **CHILDREN'S MINISTRY**

# SUMMER HANGOUTS

This summer we will be hosting hangouts for the many different age groups of our children. These hangouts will offer the opportunity for parents with children in the same age range to connect in a smaller group. Kids will enjoy playing outside while parents have a chance to socialize! Save the date below that fits the age range(s) for your family and be on the lookout for an invitation from the host. All parents will receive an Evite for a summer hangout with your church family.

## **SUMMER BACKYARD HANGOUTS**

**Sunday, June 13, 2:00pm**  
**Infants and families that are currently expecting**  
**Sarah Jensen (Crestwood)**

**Sunday, June 13, 3:30pm**  
**Toddlers**  
**Lindsay Luketic (Vestavia Hills)**

**Sunday, June 27, 3:00pm**  
**2 - 4 years**  
**Lauren Dean (Hoover)**

**Sunday, July 11, 3:00pm**  
**Elementary**  
**Nicole LeMaitre (Homewood)**

**Sunday, July 18, 3:30pm - older 4's - 6 years**  
**Katie Reed (Bluff Park)**

# STUDENT MINISTRY

AT FIRST CHURCH

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## HELP NEEDED

During Summer Serve Week (July 5-9) we are looking for adult volunteers to help us ensure we have an amazing week. Summer Serve is a week where our students will partner with local organizations learning how we can serve God with our head, heart and hands.

We would love to invite you to serve as much as your schedule allows Monday - Friday. Any help is needed.

- Transportation - help transport students from First Church to work site for the day
- Snacks - provide snacks for service team to enjoy throughout the day
- Lunch - provide lunch for service team once during the week

If you are interested in serving, please email [Tiffany@firstchurchbhm.com](mailto:Tiffany@firstchurchbhm.com) with what days you would like to serve and/or if you have any questions.

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## SUMMER TRIPS

### **SUMMER SERVE WEEK | JULY 5-9**

Summer Serve is open to all upcoming 6th graders through graduating seniors. We will spend the week serving our local community. Our focus for the week will be on serving and worshiping with our whole selves: serving and loving God with our head, heart, and hands.

### **BEACH WEEKEND | JULY 15-17**

We all need a break from our busy schedules, so we are heading to the beach for a weekend of fellowship, worship, and relaxing.

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## SCHEDULE

**Youth - Sundays, 4:00pm - 6:00pm at First Church**

### June

2 - SUMMER KICK-OFF  
6/12 - MYSTERY TRIP

### July

5/9 - SUMMER SERVE  
10 - LEGION FC GAME @ 6PM  
15/17 - BEACH WEEKEND  
19/23 - ARTS CAMP (VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY)

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## STAY IN TOUCH

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

INSTAGRAM - [@FIRSTCHURCHBHM.YOUTH](https://www.instagram.com/FIRSTCHURCHBHM.YOUTH)  
FACEBOOK - [FIRST CHURCH BIRMINGHAM - YOUTH GROUP](https://www.facebook.com/FIRSTCHURCHBIRMINGHAM-YOUTHGROUP)



# VIRTUAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE

## JUNE 4 - 5

Due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, the North Alabama Annual Conference will be adapted to be a shorter, virtual meeting with satellite venues for those without reliable internet capabilities in their area.

First Church is excited to share that this year Emily Chastain will be ordained as a Deacon in full connection at 9:00am on Saturday, June 5. You are invited to join in this celebration virtually as you can watch the livestream **HERE**.

## FIRST CHURCH VACCINATION TEAM



Thank you to Nancy Keith, Renee Harmon, Avery Rhodes, and the fantastic team of First Church folks who hosted our first vaccination clinic at Church of the Reconciler for our friends in Birmingham who are experiencing homelessness. We are grateful for the gift of their time and resources in working to make sure ALL people in Birmingham have access to vaccinations and care during this pandemic. They will be hosting a second vaccination clinic on June 6 at Church of the Reconciler.

# 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 will always be a place where truth is spoken, authenticity thrives, and all are welcome. We pray that everyone who enters in feels the presence of God and has the support to grow closer to Him.

- Jill, Jacob, and Eli Johnson

We pray First Church continues to fan the flame of the Spirit already present to continue bringing light to the city of Birmingham and the state of Alabama, expanding through the US and the world. We pray that our souls and all of those touched through First Church realize their Divine goodness through the experience of belonging which brings out deep bonds of love through creativity and friendship.

- Justin, Maggie, Sophie, and AJ Banger

May the leadership and members of FUMC have "listening hearts" to engage with each other and our communities in open communication and actions that are inclusive for all of God's children.

- Cathey Leach

## GIFTS RECEIVED BY THE CHURCH

*When making a memorial gift please note that we will be mailing notices on a monthly basis.*

### TO THE MEMORIAL FUND

#### **In Memory of Ralph Bates**

From Charlotte Walker

From Pam Crider

From Lisa Malone & Jane McKenzie

From Kay Aldridge

From Charles Betts

From Thomas and Mary Gene Boulware

From Guerry Denson

From Jerry & Grova Johnson

From H. Mack Jolly

From Judith Jolly

From Wallace & Glendacile Lyons

From Dorothy Maples

From Cliff & Mary Alice Saxon

From Peggy West

From Betty & Fletcher Thorington

From Herb Williamson

From Larry & Julie Caine

From Brian & Angel Garrett

From Lyn & Ray Grant

From Andy Wallace

From Henry & Marion Lagman

### TO THE MEMORIAL FUND

#### **In Memory of Peggy Batcheler**

From Lyn & Ray Grant

#### **In Memory of Buddy Ramsey**

From Brian & Angel Garrett

### TO THE MUSIC FUND

#### **In Memory of Ralph Bates**

From Larry Ward

#### **In Memory of Peggy Batcheler**

From Larry Ward

# JUNE CALENDAR

**JUNE 4**

~ Annual Conference ~

**JUNE 7**

~ Youth Mystery Trip ~

**JUNE 11**

~ Youth Mystery Trip ~

**JUNE 5**

~ Annual Conference ~

**JUNE 8**

~ Youth Mystery Trip ~

**JUNE 12**

~ Youth Mystery Trip ~  
5:00pm - Pridefest

**JUNE 6**

~ Youth Mystery Trip ~

**JUNE 9**

~ Youth Mystery Trip ~

**JUNE 14**

~ Office Closed for Staff Development ~

**JUNE 10**

~ Youth Mystery Trip ~

## WEEKLY CALENDAR

### SUNDAY

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

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
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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