

JANUARY 2023

# CONNECTIONS

**MAKING TIME**  
FOR **COMMUNITY**

# Wednesday Night **DINNER & PROGRAMMING**

We are excited to try a new opportunity beginning Wednesday, January 11 and continuing through Wednesday, February 22 that will invite us to build connection with others, engage spiritually, enjoy a delicious meal, and grow our church family by offering Wednesday Nights at First Church.

Click [HERE](#) to read more about the different small group and age-level opportunities.

Click [HERE](#) to make your reservation now.

## WELCOME **ASHLEY HESS**

We are so excited to welcome Ashley Hess as our new Minister of Youth and Justice in January 2023. You are invited to join us for a welcome reception on Sunday, January 8 immediately following worship in the Large Dining Room. Light snacks will be available along with the opportunity for you to meet Ashley and welcome her to our team.



JANUARY SERMON SERIES

# CANCELLED

We live in a culture where we see people and companies get “cancelled” every week. They may have said the wrong thing, taken an inappropriate action, or simply not made enough social progress and, therefore, they are cancelled – deemed unredeemable, cast aside, and worthless. But does this approach resonate with our biblical mandate to forgive and love our neighbor? Does it validate our lived experiences of grace? As people of faith it is important that we pause in this “cancel” culture craze to discern how we might lead the way in society instead of following its trends. How can people of faith have humility, see disagreements not as personal attacks, offer just accountability when harm is done, and still allow for the possibility of redemption for all of humanity? In this series we will look for how we can “cancel” the very concepts of hate, wokeness, and othering that separates us and cause barriers instead of helping us recognize our common

1.8.23 | **HATE**

*MATTHEW 3:13-17, ACTS 10:34-43*

1.15.23 | **WOKENESS**

*MATHEW 23:5-7; 13-25, PSALM 40:1-11*

1.22.23 | **OTHERING**

*LUKE 19:1-10, 1 CORINTHIANS 1:10-18*

CLICK [HERE](#) FOR MORE INFORMATION

# Blessing Of The Babies

SUNDAY, JANUARY 8

Join us on Sunday, January 8 for a special day in worship as we celebrate all of the new life born into our First Church community over the past year. At 11:00am in both the Loft and the Sanctuary worship services we will name, bless, and pray for all of the new babies and their families.

## TAKING ADVENT DECORATIONS DOWN

SUNDAY, JANUARY 8 FOLLOWING WORSHIP

Please stay after worship and our Welcome Reception for Ashley Hess on Sunday, January 8 to help take down our beautiful Advent decorations across our campus as we secure them for next year. Feel free to bring your lunch or grab something after we finish putting everything away.

STARTING IN JANUARY

# AWAKENINGS

NEW ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS

9:45 AM IN THE FIRESIDE ROOM IN THE EDUCATION BUILDING

**AWAKENINGS:** Raising Consciousness through Curious Compassionate Community, is a new intergenerational Sunday School class beginning in the new year. Each week will be an interactive conversation on what Jesus described as essential to awakened human relationships: Justice - Mercy - Faith. Together - through personal story, the inspiration of scripture, the enneagram of spirituality, and more - we will help each other do the ongoing inner consciousness work that leads to more awakened action in our personal relationships and in our wider communities of influence.

You are invited to join hosts/facilitators Jessica Yarbrough and Erika Jobs, and Carie and Art Wimberly, to help begin the conversation on Sunday mornings at 9:45am beginning Sunday, January 8. A reminder that nursery care is available during the Sunday School hour for anyone who needs it. For more information please email Art at: [art@thrivebham.com](mailto:art@thrivebham.com) or Jessica at: [jessicay731@gmail.com](mailto:jessicay731@gmail.com)

# CHURCHWIDE RETREAT

February 10-12, 2023 at Camp McDowell



SEARCHING FOR WISDOM, CONNECTION, AND PEACE

**Our "Cultivate" retreat is approaching quickly and we hope you will make plans to join us! Our annual church-wide retreat is one of the most significant times to build community and make connections – not to mention grow spiritually. Child-care and children's recreational options will be available for kids from preschool through elementary. Youth will also have their own learning sessions and breakout opportunities during the weekend.**

Click [HERE](#) to see the schedule for the weekend.

**The cost for the weekend is \$180 for a single registration, \$300 for a couple, and \$350 for a family of four. Any families in need of an extra room can reserve one for \$100. A \$50 deposit is due upon registration. Weekend costs includes breakfast on both days as well as dinner on Friday evening and lunch and dinner on Saturday.**

**We are asking everyone who has already registered to pay their remaining balance by February 1. Please contact Katherine Mullen at [Katherine@firstchurchbhm.com](mailto:Katherine@firstchurchbhm.com) to inquire about your remaining balance, request scholarship funds, or to find out more information.**

**CLICK HERE TO REGISTER**

*Welcoming*  
**REFUGEES**  
*To* **BIRMINGHAM**

**“That means you must also love immigrants because you were immigrants in Egypt.”**

– Deuteronomy 10:19

**Alabama is anticipating welcoming and serving larger numbers of refugees in January with pandemic border laws potentially being lifted. There are ways you can help show refugees love and hospitality right here at First Church.**

Click **[HERE](#)** to learn more.

# TAP CLASSES

## AT FIRST CHURCH

DID YOU KNOW THAT FIRST CHURCH OFFERS TAP CLASSES?  
IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN JOINING US,  
CLASSES ARE STARTING BACK UP ON **MONDAY, JANUARY 9.**

THE TIMES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

**TAP LEVEL I : 5:45PM – 6:45PM**

**TAP LEVEL II : 6:50PM – 7:50PM**

CLICK [\*\*HERE\*\*](#) TO SIGN UP NOW.

## TWENTY TWENTY THREE

# AYLWIN FELLOWSHIP

A long-standing women's group of First Church, the Aylwin Study Club has changed its name. Aylwin means friendship and we want to include more friends to share in this fellowship! Our focus is on hospitality over lunch, multi-generational fellowship, and inspiring programs. We typically meet 7 times a year in the Church Parlor and would love for anyone to join us.

Fellowship meetings dates for the first half of 2023 are:

February 1, March 1, April 5, and May 3

If this sounds like a fellowship you'd enjoy, please contact Fran Early at 205-223-2887 or [fpehome@bellsouth.net](mailto:fpehome@bellsouth.net) for more information. Reservations for the meetings are due by the 20th of the month prior. All are welcome!



# **GENEROUS GIVING** TO **PROJECT 12.25**



**Thank you for your generosity through Project 12/25.**

**Together we raised \$13,906 to give to Community on the Rise to help with funds to secure their second home and full-time employment for JoAnn Moak who is a 2022 graduate from their WHOLE program.**

**You are encouraged to continue learning more about Community on the Rise and to volunteer your time and talents to support their transformational ministry by contacting**

**Executive Director, Avery Rhodes at [avery@communityontherise.com](mailto:avery@communityontherise.com).**



# Getting To KNOW US Dinner

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 26, 6:00PM**

If you've been visiting with us at First Church in recent weeks or months you are invited to join us for our next Getting to Know Us Dinner on Thursday, January 26 at 6:00pm in the Large Dining Room. This is an opportunity to enjoy a meal around the table and spend time getting to know more about you and sharing more about First Church. Childcare will be available with a reservation. Click [HERE](#) to register now.



**FIRST  
CHURCH 101**

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 29 FOLLOWING WORSHIP**

On Sunday, January 29 we will host First Church 101 after worship. A light lunch will be offered before we move into our time of learning and conversation. During our time together we will share more about United Methodist theology, polity, and Social Principles as well as what membership means at First Church and ways to find deeper connection and community. Childcare will be available with a reservation.

CLICK [HERE](#) TO REGISTER NOW.

# FIRST CHURCH ONLINE DIRECTORY

Did you know that our online database offers us an online directory? Everyone who is a regular part of the First Church family has access to this online directory. You can find it at any time by visiting our website, clicking on the “Resources” tab and scrolling down to the tab labeled “directory.” You will need a username and password to enter the database. If you do not have this information (or cannot remember it from before), please reach out to Katie Gilbert at [Katie@firstchurchbhm.com](mailto:Katie@firstchurchbhm.com).

As we begin this new year, we are re-launching our online directory by encouraging everyone to upload a photo. One of the ways we plan to do this is to take your picture and upload it for you! We are currently recruiting a team of volunteers to help make sure anyone who wants their picture included can have a recent photo. In addition, this team will put a plan in place to help us capture new members as people join the First Church family. If you are interested in being a part of this re-launch, please reach out to Bernie Hardy at [blhardyvt67@outlook.com](mailto:blhardyvt67@outlook.com).

# CITY KIDS UPDATES

## COAT AND MITTEN DRIVE

DURING THE MONTH OF JANUARY

Families are encouraged to bring a new coat or two with packs of mittens and gloves.

## SERVE DAY

JANUARY 16 - 10:00AM

Kids and their adults are invited to meet at the church for a morning of serving together. We'll serve until noon and can grab a meal together to share.

# YOUTH MINISTRY

A T F I R S T C H U R C H

## JANUARY YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL SERIES

BACK TO THE FUTURE - A SERIES ON JUSTICE

## MDWK SERVICE | WEDNESDAY NIGHTS

THE MDWK SERVICE WILL PROVIDE STUDENTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD COMMUNITY. DURING OUR TIME TOGETHER IN JANUARY WE WILL BE DISCUSSING GOALS, AND GOD SIZED DREAMS. STUDENTS CAN EXPECT TO PLAY GAMES, STUDY SCRIPTURE, AND SPEND TIME IN TABLE TALK DISCUSSIONS.

# AS WE SEEK TO BE AN OPEN PLACE FOR ALL

*MY PRAYER FOR FIRST CHURCH IS:*

***It remains as welcoming as it has been since the first day we walked in the doors and that the congregation continues to grow together in faith and serving their community.***

*- Melissa Mehaffey*

***That it continues to be a safe environment for people who have felt “othered” in the church. That my family will have a community to learn, serve, ask questions, and feel loved in an inclusive environment.***

*- Katherine Mehaffey*

***To find meaningful ways to serve, engage with a loving congregation, and continue to live the message and work of First Church in our daily lives. We pray for the care and strength of the church with difficult decisions ahead and pray for faith and peace as it builds its future.***

*- Stephanie Heupel & Stirling Hutchins*

***To continue to be welcoming to all, and to serve those in all forms of need – to respect the expression of God’s love in others.***

*- Virginia Loftin*

***Continue its mission to be a safe harbor for all God’s children, as God is big enough for all of us.***

*- Bob Loftin*

***That all may know they belong here, fully and completely as they are. And, that First Church can be their “home” if they need it to be.***

*- Katherine Mullen*

***First Church continues to be a loving place as it continues to grow. The warmth and friendliness are the two things that set the church apart.***

*- Matt and Melissa Leahey*



# FIRST CHURCH COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP

The First Church Finance Team has created a process so that graduating seniors can apply for and access funds available to help those preparing for college. The amount and number of scholarships will be determined based on a number of factors, including funds available in the Living Church Fund. The scholarship application window will remain open through February 28, 2023 and award recipients will be notified by March 31. Click [HERE](#) to apply now.

## GIFTS RECEIVED BY THE CHURCH

### TO THE MEMORIAL FUND

#### IN MEMORY OF JEAN MALONE

From David & Terri Glasgow  
From John & Betty McMahon  
From Steve Pitts  
From Betty & Fletcher Thorington  
From John & Sally Bowers  
From Tom & Mary Gene Boulware  
From Cosmos Club  
From Peggy West  
From George & Betty Likis  
From Cathy Ward  
From Cheryl and James Jackson  
From Pam Crider  
From Alison Watson

#### IN MEMORY OF JOHN HOLT

From Linda Holt  
From Mary Ann Davis  
From Tom & Mary Gene Boulware  
From Dick Briggs

#### IN MEMORY OF ANN JACKSON

From Carolyn Curry and friends of her daughter Betty

#### IN MEMORY OF ROBERT EDWARDS

From Tom & Mary Gene Boulware

### TO THE MUSIC FUND

#### IN MEMORY OF JEAN MALONE

From Malinda Hayes

### TO THE ELC

#### IN MEMORY OF JEAN MALONE

From Sara Baker



# UPDATE YOUR **CONTACT INFORMATION**

We know a lot has changed over the last year - many of you have moved, changed jobs, phone numbers, email addresses, etc. If you or your family have made any changes to your contact information in the past year, please take a moment to let us know. You may do so by contacting our Office Administrator Peg Thompson at [Peg@firstchurchbhm.com](mailto:Peg@firstchurchbhm.com).

## OUR CALENDAR

### SUNDAY

9:00am: Virtual Live Stream Service

9:45am: Sunday School

11:00am: Loft & Sanctuary In Person Worship

### WEDNESDAY

5:30pm: Dinner

6:30pm: Programming

**Click [HERE](#) to view our monthly calendar.**

# 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 Children: Cristin Dedmon .....	Cristin@firstchurchbhm.com
Minister of Community Engagement: Katherine Mullen .....	Katherine@firstchurchbhm.com
Minister of Youth & Justice: Ashley Hess .....	Ashley@firstchurchbhm.com
Organist: Richard Byrd .....	Richard@firstchurchbhm.com
Design: Blake Hobbs .....	Blake@firstchurchbhm.com
Minister of Music: Patrick Evans .....	Patrick@firstchurchbhm.com
Office Administrator: Peg Thompson .....	Peg@firstchurchbhm.com
Business Administrator: Steve Pitts .....	Steve@firstchurchbhm.com
Maintenance Supervisor: Ron Dates .....	Ron@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**

518 North 19th Street • Birmingham AL 35203  
205-254-3186 • [www.firstchurchbhm.com](http://www.firstchurchbhm.com)