


FEBRUARY 2023

CONNECTIONS

A photograph of a group of people at a community event. In the foreground, a man in a grey sweater and glasses is hugging a woman in a blue sweater. They are both wearing a colorful plaid scarf. In the background, other people are visible, including a man in a blue t-shirt and a woman in a black jacket with a name tag. The scene is indoors and appears to be a social gathering.

**CULTIVATING LIFE
TOGETHER**

FAT TUESDAY PANCAKE DINNER



FEBRUARY 21 AT 6:00PM IN THE LARGE DINING ROOM

It's that time of year again! Bring your most festive Mardi Gras outfit and a big appetite down to the church on **February 21 at 6:00pm** for our Fat Tuesday Pancake Dinner. Together we'll eat delicious food, absorb the beautiful sounds of New Orleans-style jazz music, and dance the night away! This dinner is free of charge but you must register by February 16 as we will need an accurate headcount. We will also be collecting donations towards our Panama mission trip this July. Come dressed in your party suit and laissez les bons temps rouler!

Click [HERE](#) to sign up now!

ASH

WEDNESDAY

FEBRUARY 22 | 12:00PM & 6:30PM

Ash Wednesday is the beginning of our Lenten season as a church family. It is a time of worship marked by remembering our humanity and mortality. We recognize it is God's love that invites all into a repentance and reconciliation. In worship we will receive ashes on our hands or foreheads in an act of repentance and a sign of penitence. Join us for one of our Ash Wednesday Services at 12:00pm in the Chapel or 6:30pm in the Sanctuary following Wednesday night dinner. (Don't forget to make your dinner reservation).

FIRST CHURCH BIRMINGHAM'S

LENT

SCHEDULE

FEBRUARY 22

ASH WEDNESDAY

12:00PM | THE CHAPEL & 6:30PM | THE SANCTUARY

APRIL 2

PALM SUNDAY

11:00AM | THE LOFT & SANCTUARY

APRIL 6

MAUNDY THURSDAY

6:00PM | THE LARGE DINING ROOM

APRIL 7

GOOD FRIDAY

12:00PM | THE SANCTUARY

FEBRUARY SERMON SERIES

WALK GENTLY

In James 1:19 we read, “everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to grow angry.” Today’s world presents Christians with unique challenges as we strive to embody these three ways of being. Too often we jump to conclusions, we block out the voices of those with whom we disagree, we speak before we think, and we let anger get the very best of us. Join us in this three week series as we seek to explore how we can lean into compassionate listening, dialogue in kindness, respond and not react, and approach one another in love.

1.29 | Quick To Listen

JAMES 1:19-27, LUKE 10:38-42, PROVERBS 1:1-5

2.5 | Slow To Speak

JAMES 3:4-9, LUKE 2:41-46

2.12 | Retreat Weekend

VIRTUAL WORSHIP ONLY

2.19 | Slow To Anger

PHILIPPIANS 2:1- 4, ROMANS 12: 9-19, 1 JOHN 3:13-18

Click [HERE](#) to read more.

Wednesday Night **DINNER** & **PROGRAMMING**

Join us on Wednesday nights at 5:30pm in our Large Dining Room for dinner and programming. Enjoy a delicious meal and thoughtful conversation with your church family for a mid-week pick-me-up. We offer small groups after dinner beginning at 6:30pm through 7:30pm, in addition to programming for youth and children. The deadline to reserve a meal each week is Monday at noon.

Click [HERE](#) to register now.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT **BIBLE STUDY**

MARCH 8 - APRIL 26 | 6:30-7:30PM

This Bible study class will follow along with our sermon series and themes in worship using that week's Scripture to dig deeper into the meaning it may hold for our lives today. This is an easy class for folks to drop in and out of based upon their weekly schedule. No preparation needed. Bring your Bible and an open heart and mind.

Be on the lookout for more small groups in March.

CHURCHWIDE RETREAT

February 10-12, 2023 at Camp McDowell



SEARCHING FOR WISDOM, CONNECTION, AND PEACE

Our annual church-wide retreat at Camp McDowell is approaching and we are looking forward to spending the weekend together. In addition to our large group sessions, we'll be spending time in fellowship playing games, hiking, cooking smores, and taking time to rest and recharge. We ask for your prayers for a safe journey and meaningful time away.

If you are not able to attend the retreat, we will have a virtual-only service on Sunday, February 12 at 9:00am viewable through our YouTube livestream.

BIBLE STUDY CLASS

All are invited to join the Sunday Morning Bible Study Class for a discussion series on forgiveness led by Dr. Stewart Jackson. This series will provide an opportunity to deepen our understanding of this topic as it is presented in the Bible, interpreted by the medieval philosopher Maimonides, and further informed by Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg's recent book *Repentance and Repair*. The series will start on Sunday, February 26 and the class meets in the Library on the first floor of the Education Building. All are welcome to attend. Please contact Stephen Smith for more information at stephenbsmith@gmail.com.

YOUTH MINISTRY

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

VOLUNTEER LUNCH FEBRUARY 26

PLEASE JOIN CRISTIN AND ASHLEY RIGHT AFTER WORSHIP ON FEBRUARY 26TH TO FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN BE INVOLVED IN THE CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRIES. SAFE SANCTUARY TRAINING WILL BE OFFERED, WHICH IS A REQUIREMENT TO WORK WITH ANY OF OUR STUDENTS AT FIRST CHURCH. LUNCH AND CHILDCARE WILL BE PROVIDED FOR THIS TRAINING SESSION. TO MAKE YOUR RESERVATION FOR THE TRAINING PLEASE CONTACT ASHLEY HESS ASHLEY@FIRSTCHURCHBHM.COM

DISCOVERY WEEKEND MARCH 17-19

DISCOVERY WEEKEND IS BACK, MARCH 17TH - 19TH. SAVE THE DATE FOR ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING EVENTS IN OUR YOUTH MINISTRY. THIS WILL BE A WEEKEND WHERE STUDENTS WILL ENCOUNTER GOD IN A REAL WAY THROUGH WORSHIP, TEACHING, COMMUNITY, AND A TON OF FUN. STUDENTS WILL STAY OVERNIGHT IN CHURCH MEMBERS' HOMES ON FRIDAY AND SATURDAY, AND WILL WORSHIP TOGETHER ON SUNDAY MORNING. THE COST OF THE EVENT WILL BE \$100 AND WILL INCLUDE ALL MEALS AND FUN. A DEPOSIT OF \$50 WILL BE DUE BY FEBRUARY 26, 2023. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT ASHLEY HESS AT ASHLEY@FIRSTCHURCHBHM.COM

MDWK SERVICE FEBRUARY

THE MDWK SERVICE WILL PROVIDE STUDENTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD COMMUNITY. DURING OUR TIME TOGETHER IN FEBRUARY WE WILL BE DISCUSSING SCANDALOUS FAITH. STUDENTS CAN EXPECT TO PLAY GAMES, STUDY SCRIPTURE, AND SPEND TIME IN DISCUSSION.

SUNDAY SCHOOL SERIES FEBRUARY

RAD - A FOUR WEEK SERIES FROM THE BOOK OF JAMES ON LOVING OTHERS.

EXPLORING OUR FUTURE

Executive Council met on Tuesday January 10th to welcome our new lay members for the coming year and to discuss our role of offering vision and leadership for the coming year. We shared the timeline of our meetings and topics for discussion as we will seek to clarify our call and explore our future in 2023.

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Click [HERE](#) to learn more about Exploring Our Future.

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Click [HERE](#) to view our timeline.
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JUSTICE & MERCY UPDATE

As of Tuesday, January 17, 2023, the WE Café at Urban Ministry is open 5 days a week for lunch!! This is only possible because of the amazing involvement of volunteers! If you would like to volunteer, please contact Casey Hobbs, either at 205-781-0517 or by email at casey@urban-ministry.org. There will be training sessions so that everyone will be on the same page. To see more about the WE Café, click [HERE](#).

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.

AS WE SEEK TO BE AN OPEN PLACE FOR ALL

MY PRAYER FOR FIRST CHURCH IS:

We openly embrace everyone with love even if we differ in some aspects of life – but we commit to diversity and inclusion.

- Joelle Garrett

That it continues to give love and a safe space for all people and a wonderful worship space for us.

- Katherine and Krista Everett

A prayer of healing and discernment. I pray that First Church is always a place of healing for all – regardless of their past, present, or future. A church congregation that uses discernment to strengthen its identity and its discipleship.

- Stephanie Holderby

I will serve out the purposes of First Church.

- Buzzy Brown





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.

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**

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