

MARCH 2023

CONNECTIONS



ON THE LENTEN JOURNEY

TRAVELING THE

Road To **FREEDOM**

A L E N T E N J O U R N E Y

In the five Sundays of Lent, we follow the path of the very human Jesus who defies the expected standards of the day and culture to lead his followers to a path of freedom, new life, and redemption. Following the lectionary texts, we invite you to join us on the road to freedom.

2.26 | TEMPTATION

PSALM 32, MATTHEW 4:1-11

3.5 | A NEW BIRTH

PSALM 121, JOHN 3:1-17

3.12 | LIVING WATER

PSALM 95, JOHN 4:5-42

3.19 | A NEW VISION

1 SAMUEL 16:1-13, JOHN 9:1-41

3.26 | A NEW LIFE

EZEKIEL 37:1-14, JOHN 11:1-45

4.2 | THE ROAD TO FREEDOM

PSALM 118, MATTHEW 21:1-11

Click [HERE](#) to read more.

FIRST CHURCH BIRMINGHAM'S

LENT

SCHEDULE

APRIL 2

PALM SUNDAY

11:00AM | THE LOFT & SANCTUARY

APRIL 6

MAUNDY THURSDAY

5:30PM | THE LARGE DINING ROOM

6:30PM | THE LOFT

APRIL 7

GOOD FRIDAY

12:00PM | THE SANCTUARY

MAUNDY THURSDAY

APRIL 6, 5:30PM IN THE LARGE DINING ROOM | 6:30PM IN THE LOFT

You are invited to join us for dinner at 5:30pm in the Large Dining Room prior to the Maundy Thursday worship service. This dinner will take the place of our normal Wednesday night meal for the week. Following dinner you are invited to join us for worship and communion in the Loft at 6:30pm. The worship service will end with a communal experience in our courtyard. Please click [HERE](#) to make reservations for dinner (as a reminder reservations are due on Monday, April 3 at 12:00pm). You do not have to attend dinner to come to worship. We hope you will plan on joining us for this special evening.



GOOD FRIDAY

APRIL 7, 12:00PM IN THE SANCTUARY

You are invited to join us for a Tenebrae service on Good Friday, April 7 at 12:00pm in the Sanctuary 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 music, 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 join us as we remember the grief and loss of Good Friday.



SATURDAY, APRIL 1 | 4:00PM - 6:00PM

Birmingham Southern College's Campus - President's Lawn

All are invited to join this fun event with bounce houses, cotton candy, crafts, and over 1,600 eggs! Bring a friend to hop in on the excitement.

Wednesday Night **DINNER & PROGRAMMING**

We have been so excited to see the feedback from Wednesday nights over the last few weeks. Because we've had such a great turnout, we've decided to keep the good times rolling! We will continue Wednesday Night Dinner and Programming until May 3 at which point we will break for the summer and return after Labor Day. Thank you for making these dinners an amazing time of fellowship. To register for dinner and check out the menu, click [HERE](#). As a reminder reservations are due each Monday at 12:00pm.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT **PROGRAMMING OPTIONS**

As we move into another round of small groups we invite you to find a study that fits your interests. Click [HERE](#) to read more detailed information about our offerings as well as to register to participate.

WHY DID JESUS DIE?

A SMALL GROUP ON ATONEMENT THEORY

If you recently attended the Cultivate Retreat or have participated in Manna and Mercy, you have been reminded of the idea that substitutionary atonement is not the only way that Christians have to understand the work of Jesus on the cross. To provide an opportunity to dig in more deeply, Rev. Stephanie York Arnold and Rev. Katie Gilbert will lead a small group on Wednesday nights April 12 - 26 to explore the different theories of atonement and provide more time for discussion. We hope you will make plans to join us as we learn and deepen our understanding together.



Sign up now to be a traveler on **The Journey**, a First Church men's retreat, at Camp McDowell just outside Jasper, AL, on May 5-7, 2023. This retreat will create space for you to gather with friends, some you haven't even met yet, as we walk with Jesus through some of his most powerful parables. This retreat will bring together travelers of all ages and stages of life to connect, grow, and study the new kingdom announced by Jesus in the parables. Led by Rev. Jonathan Goss and a laity team, it will begin at 6:00pm on Friday, May 5 (dinner provided), include 3 meals on Saturday, and close after breakfast on Sunday, May 7.

Click [HERE](#) to learn more and register now.



PANAMA

LEARN AND SERVE

Our Panama Team is gearing up for this summer's learn and serve week by hosting 3 more fundraisers. Mark your calendars for the following events and help support or partnership with Panama.

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 9 | 9:00AM - 10:30AM | IN THE LARGE DINING ROOM

Come early and enjoy a pancake breakfast prepared by the Panama Team before Sunday school and Easter worship. Breakfast will be donation based.

SILENT AUCTION AND LUNCH

SUNDAY, APRIL 23 | 9:00AM - 12:30PM | IN THE LARGE DINING ROOM

The Silent Auction will run from 9:00am - 12:30pm in the Large Dining Room with a Panamanian style lunch served following worship. At the conclusion of the Silent Auction there will be several large ticket items auctioned live.

DINNER UNDER THE STARS

SATURDAY, JUNE 3 | 6:30PM | IN THE COURTYARD

Join us in our Courtyard to feast under the lights of downtown on Saturday, June 3 at 6:30pm.

There will be a delicious three course meal and mocktails.

More information on ticket prices and how to purchase to come.

PANAMA TEAM MEMBERS INCLUDE:

Jonathan Goss, Larry Caine, Julie Caine, Bert Pitts, Charlotte Peverly, Linda Malone, Beth Curry, Avery Rhodes, Hopper Akins, Avery Perry, JC Powell, Buzzy Brown, and Ashley Hess

GIVING BASKET PROJECT

During the month of March you are invited to donate supplies for ALR Hope (Any Length Resources). ALR is a recovery community that provides ethical, supportive, and safe recovery to men and women. ALR's goal is to equip all individuals in the community with tools to take with them on their journey from alcoholism and addiction to complete transformation. Supplies will be gathered in the entryways of the Sanctuary and Loft during the month of March. Please consider giving an item(s) from the following list:

SHAMPOO & CONDITIONER
BODY WASH
TOOTHPASTE & TOOTHBRUSHES
DEODORANT
PADS & PANTY LINERS
TAMPONS
TOWELS & WASHCLOTHS
PILLOWS

LAUNDRY DETERGENT
PAPER TOWELS & TOILET PAPER
DISH DETERGENT
BEDSHEETS (TWIN & QUEEN)
BLANKETS/COMFORTERS (TWIN & QUEEN)
NOTEBOOKS
PENS & HIGHLIGHTERS
STICKY NOTES

MCALLEN, TEXAS BORDER TRIP

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20 - TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24 | COST \$1000

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Join United Methodist Volunteers in Mission and First Church for our second trip to McAllen, Texas along the Mexican border as we learn about immigration and the lived experience of refugees.

Click [HERE](#) to learn more and sign up to join us.



SAVE THE DATES

8.4.23 - 8.6.23

MANNA & MERCY

AT FIRST CHURCH BIRMINGHAM

FIRST CHURCH

GARDEN CLUB

W E D N E S D A Y , M A R C H 1 5

You are invited to join the Garden Club on Wednesday, March 15 for a program presented by Greg Harber on the Birds of Railroad Park. As most of you know, Railroad Park is a 19-acre green space located in midtown Birmingham. While we often think of the park as a place for recreation, it also provides a remarkable habitat for native plants and wildlife. In fact, 112 species of birds have been documented at the park.

Greg Harber is a longtime member of Alabama Audubon and currently serves as the Conservation Committee chairman. An experienced photographer, he is employed at UAB and is a frequent visitor to Railroad Park.

Reservations for the program and lunch may be made by contacting
Garden Club President PJ Hester at PJCardenHester@aol.com.

EXPLORING OUR FUTURE

Executive Council met on Monday, February 13 following our Cultivate Retreat. We spent time reflecting on all we learned about our values as a congregation and our journey through the Four Fold Way from the Cultivate Retreat in February.

CLICK [HERE](#) TO READ A SUMMARY OF OUR NOTES.

Meeting w/ District Superintendent

SUNDAY, MARCH 5 AT 4:00PM IN THE LOFT

Join your church family for a discussion of our denominational polity and doctrine with our District Superintendent Rick Owen at 4:00pm in the Loft on Sunday, March 5. Our DS will share with us the current state of the United Methodist Church as we seek to learn all we can about our denomination's potential future.

YOUTH MINISTRY

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

MDWK SERVICE

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS IN MARCH

MDWK during the month of March is titled FOCUS. Students will dive deep into a study on spiritual growth.

CONFIRMATION CLASSES

BEGINNING ON SUNDAY, MARCH 5

Confirmation classes for grades 7th -12th will begin on Sunday, March 5. This is an opportunity for students to learn about what it means to become a member of the church, explore their faith, and ask questions. Confirmands will complete weekly lessons during the Sunday School hour with Rev. Ted Leach (a retired United Methodist pastor) and our pastoral staff. Confirmation Sunday will be held on May 14 during the Sunday School hour in the Chapel.

DISCOVERY WEEKEND

MARCH 17 – 19

Discovery Weekend is back. 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 a dorm style facility just miles away from the church on Friday and Saturday night. Discovery Weekend will finish with all students who attend worshipping in the loft 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 March 1 and the remaining balance is due March 15. Click [HERE](#) to sign up now.

CITY KIDS UPDATES

THE WILDERNESS

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS - 6:30PM-7:00PM

Join CityKids as we travel into exile (not scary!) to explore the teachings of the Old Testament and how it relates to Jesus' time in the Wilderness.

FAMILY ST. PATRICK'S DAY HIKE

SATURDAY, MARCH 18 - 10:00AM

at Red Mountain

THE ATRIUM

SUNDAY, MARCH 19

Sunday School Lesson on Prayer Labyrinths

FIRST CHURCH'S OUTDOOR CAMP



JUNE 12 - JUNE 15 | 9:00AM - 4:00PM

RISING 1ST -5TH GRADE

This year we are partnering with Fresh Air Family's Gross Out Camp for four days of outdoor fun. The camp will take place in Trussville at Holy Cross Episcopal Church (right beside the Cahaba River!). We have a curriculum that will focus on exploring God's creation in the woods, creeks, and fields. We are lucky that Fresh Air Family's Director and Lead Instructor will be helping to lead our camp so the content will be great.

- There will be an option to meet at First Church to transport campers to/from Camp each day (8:30am and 4:30pm).
- Cost will be \$100/camper and will include all materials and snacks.
- Registration is open now and we have limited capacity. We will give priority to First Church Members and Frequent Visitors.

CLICK [HERE](#) TO REGISTER NOW.



MONDAY, JULY 10 - THURSDAY, JULY 13
9:00AM-1:00PM, EXTENDED CARE OPTION TO 4:00PM
RISING 4K-5TH GRADE

**ARTS CAMP IS BACK! WE WILL EXPLORE
THIS MANNA & MERCY THEMED CURRICULUM
THROUGH CRAFTS, IMPROV, SONG, DANCE, AND MORE.**

- **WE ARE EXCITED TO OFFER ARTS CAMP AT A RATE OF \$25/CAMPER WHICH INCLUDES LUNCH AND A MORNING SNACK.**
- **AN EXTENDED CARE OPTION WILL BE AVAILABLE THAT WILL RUN TO 4:00PM AND WILL COST \$35/CAMPER. AN AFTERNOON SNACK WILL BE PROVIDED.**

CLICK [HERE](#) TO REGISTER NOW.

GIFTS RECEIVED BY THE CHURCH

TO THE MEMORIAL FUND

IN MEMORY OF RAY GRANT

From Sam & Peggy Heide

IN MEMORY OF PATTY FAULKNER

From Elise Doss

IN MEMORY OF JEAN MALONE

From Sam & Peggy Heide
From Marsha Robins
From Jack Sharp

IN MEMORY OF ANN JACKSON

From Sam & Peggy Heide

IN MEMORY OF JOHN HOLT

From Roseanne Holt

IN MEMORY OF MR. & MRS. WILLIAM HUGH ETHEREDGE

From Lauren Daniel

IN MEMORY OF KATELYN HANCOCK

From Sam & Peggy Heide

TO THE MUSIC FUND

IN MEMORY OF JEAN MALONE

From John & Kathy Draper

IN HONOR OF MARY ANN BATES

From Larry Ward

IN HONOR OF JULIE GLENN

From Joe & Jenny Walker

IN HONOR OF CHARLES & WYNNETT LEE

From Larry Ward

TO YOUTH MINISTRY

IN MEMORY OF CHENEY LAWLER

From Marsha Robins

TO UMCOR

IN MEMORY OF LARRY VINES

From Carol Craig

TO THE LIVING CHURCH FUND

IN HONOR OF MARY ANN BATES

From Ralph Jolly

IN HONOR OF STEPHANIE YORK ARNOLD

From Marlin & Rochelle Anderson

AS WE SEEK TO BE AN OPEN PLACE FOR ALL

MY PRAYER FOR FIRST CHURCH IS:

The continued ability to navigate division within US culture by being a place where congregants feel accepted for who they are.

- Graeme Lide

That we will embody the church as Jesus meant for it to exist by seeking his truth and living out his love.

- Jacob Justice

That the church will intentionally show respect for others, regardless of who they are and where they come from.

- Katie Justice



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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