

APRIL 2023

CONNECTIONS

SEEING THROUGH
NEW EYES

APRIL SERMON SERIES

CROWDED TABLE

In this series, Crowded Table, we will explore different Gospel stories and the ways Jesus used the importance of a meal to show us how to invite everyone to the table, even if it's a picnic on the beach. In addition we will highlight a few of our ministry partners as they are working to create more room around tables for individuals who need to hear that there is space for them.

APRIL 16 | THE TABLE IS ANYWHERE

JOHN 21: 1-13 & PSALM 107:1-9 - URBAN MINISTRY

APRIL 23 | A HEALING TABLE

LUKE 14:1-6 & PSALM 25:1-6 - ONE PLACE

APRIL 30 | A TABLE FOR EVERYONE

MATTHEW 9:9-13, LUKE 14:7-24, & PSALM 147:1-11 - MAGIC CITY ACCEPTANCE CENTER

MAY 7 | THE TABLE IS OVERFLOWING

JOHN 6:1-14 & PSALM 36: 5-10 - ALABAMA INTERFAITH REFUGEE PARTNERSHIP

CLICK [HERE](#) TO READ MORE

FIRST CHURCH BIRMINGHAM'S

HOLYWEEK SCHEDULE

APRIL 2

PALM SUNDAY

11:00AM | MEET IN THE COURTYARD TO BEGIN WORSHIP
(FOLLOWED BY WORSHIP IN THE LOFT & SANCTUARY)

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APRIL 6

MAUNDY THURSDAY

5:30PM | DINNER IN THE LARGE DINING ROOM
6:30PM | WORSHIP IN THE LOFT

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APRIL 7

GOOD FRIDAY

12:00PM | WORSHIP IN THE SANCTUARY

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APRIL 9

EASTER SUNDAY

9:00AM - 10:30AM | PANCAKE BREAKFAST (FUNDRAISER FOR PANAMA)
11:00AM | WORSHIP IN THE LOFT & SANCTUARY

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MAUNDY THURSDAY

THURSDAY, APRIL 6 | 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 by 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.



EASTER FLOWER CROSS

If you plan to attend on Easter Sunday, April 9, don't forget to bring flowers to add to our Easter Cross. Flowers can be from your home or garden (or even the grocery store!). As a reminder we have moved our flower cross to the front of our Sanctuary building along 19th Street so that it can serve as a reminder of resurrection to everyone who passes by our building. This is a great tradition that we look forward to continuing this year as we celebrate Easter together.

Easter **PANCAKE BREAKFAST**

PANAMA FUNDRAISER
LARGE DINING ROOM | 9:00AM - 10:30AM



Come early on Easter Sunday and enjoy a pancake breakfast prepared by the Panama Learn and Serve Team before Sunday School and Easter worship. Breakfast will be donation based and all funds will go towards the Panama Team's travel and work in Panama this summer.



PANAMA

SILENT AUCTION AND LUNCH

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

The Panama Learn and Serve Team's Lunch and Silent Auction will be on Sunday, April 23. The Silent Auction will run from 9:00am - 12:30pm in the Large Dining Room with a Panamanian lunch served following worship. Following the closing of the Silent Auction there will be several large ticket items auctioned off live. All proceeds will go towards the team and support the work they will be doing July 1-9 in Panama. Meal tickets are \$15 per adult and \$10 per child (with a \$50 family cap for 4 or more) and help to cover the cost of the meal in addition to raising funds for Panama. Please click [HERE](#) to make your reservation now.

We would also like to ask for your help as we work to fill our auction with "must have" items. Think about your favorite coffee shops, jewelry stores, restaurants for gift cards, art shops, or any other items that you would want to have. Furniture, baked goods, plants, photo shoot, babysitting, Alabama and Auburn memorabilia, and much more are all great examples of things you can donate or ways you can offer your own time and services. All items can be brought to the Office Building and stored in a classroom on the first floor. Please let Jonathan Goss know if you are planning on donating at Jonathan@firstchurchbhm.com

Wednesday Night **DINNER & PROGRAMMING**

We will continue Wednesday Night Dinner and Programming until May 3 when 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 April dinners and check out the menu, click [HERE](#).

We also invite you to mark your calendars and make plans to join us for an Ice Cream Social on Wednesday, May 3 as we close out our Wednesday Nights for the spring! Bring your sweet tooth and enjoy an ice cream sundae bar following our meal together.

NEW WEDNESDAY NIGHT **SMALL GROUP OPTIONS**

Click [HERE](#) to see all of our small group options in April and sign up to join us.

WHY DID JESUS DIE?

A SMALL GROUP ON ATONEMENT THEORY

April 12 - 26 from 6:30pm - 7:30pm | Fireside Room (BASEMENT OF THE EDUCATION BUILDING)

LED BY **REV. STEPHANIE YORK ARNOLD & REV. KATIE GILBERT**

This 3 week small group will explore different atonement theories and the many ways that Christians over time have understood the work of the cross. We will offer space for reflection, discussion, and questions as we dive in on the question of "Why did Jesus die?"

HANG OUT AT PARAMOUNT

April 12 - 26 from 6:30pm - 7:30pm | Paramount Bar (200 20TH STREET NORTH)

LED BY **JONATHAN GOSS & KATHERINE MULLEN**

Join us for some casual hangs at Paramount Bar following Wednesday Night Dinner. Paramount has arcade games, drinks, food, and televisions that show the latest sports. For anyone that wants to join, we'll plan to walk from the church together following dinner and walk back in time for the rest of the programming to end. This group is open to 18+.



THURSDAY, MAY 11 AT 6:30PM

It's baseball season and the Birmingham Barons are back at Regions Field! Come enjoy hot dogs, drinks, good baseball, and great fellowship with your church family on Thursday, May 11. We will gather outside the field starting at 6:30pm to pass out tickets, which will give you plenty of time to find your seats and grab concessions before the game begins at 7:05pm. Tickets are \$10 each and we only have 40 available for purchase. Click [HERE](#) to purchase your tickets.



Sign up now to be a traveler on **The Journey**, the 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.



PRAY AWAY

MOVIE SCREENING

FRIDAY, APRIL 21 AT THE SIDEWALK CINEMA

We invite you to attend a screening of *Pray Away* on Friday, April 21 at the Sidewalk Cinema. In this Emmy-nominated documentary former leaders of the "pray the gay away" movement contend with the aftermath unleashed by their actions, while a survivor seeks healing and acceptance from more than a decade of trauma.



MCALLEN, TEXAS BORDER TRIP

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 19 – TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24

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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.

MATTHEW VINES & THE BIBLICAL CASE FOR LGBTQIA+ INCLUSION

SUNDAY, JUNE 4 AT 4:00PM IN THE SANCTUARY

Many people believe that Scripture doesn't support the full inclusion of LGBTQIA+ persons but what if we have been reading the Bible wrong? Come learn life-giving ways to read Scripture - ways that do not exclude based upon sexuality or gender identity - as we welcome Matthew Vines, author of *God and the Gay Christian*, for an evening at First Church.

Click [HERE](#) to read more about this event.



SAVE THE DATES

8.4.23 - 8.6.23

MANNA & MERCY

AT FIRST CHURCH BIRMINGHAM

GIVING BASKET PROJECT

Did you know that the month of April is Sexual Assault Awareness month? Did you know that we have a ministry partner that actively works with victims and survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence? One Place provides coordinated services to victims of violence by working with YWCA Central Alabama, the Jefferson County District Attorney's Office, the City of Birmingham, the Birmingham Police Department, Hispanic Coalition of Alabama, and the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office.



One Place realizes for many of the victims they work with, transportation is a barrier to making it to that “next place”- to file a report, speak to a counselor, or ask questions about what to expect in court. They also know that when you're afraid, it can be overwhelming- even paralyzing-to take one more step, to tell one more person about what you've experienced. This is where First Church can help. Would you consider donating a Visa gift card, Mastercard gift card, or a gift card to a gas station? These gift cards will provide transportation for victims of domestic violence to make it to all of their scheduled appointments. Please place your gift cards in the offering plates during worship on Sunday mornings or in the offering boxes in the Sanctuary or Loft.

EXPLORING OUR FUTURE

The First Church Executive Council met on Monday, March 10 to discuss our Listening Session with District Superintendent Rick Owen. We spent time reflecting on all that was shared by Rick and the questions that our congregation offered to be discussed.

CLICK [HERE](#) TO READ MORE ABOUT THE MEETING.

LISTENING SESSION

with **Reconciling Ministries**

SUNDAY, APRIL 30 AT 4:00PM IN THE LOFT



RECONCILING MINISTRIES NETWORK

Come learn from Helen Ryde, our Southeastern Jurisdiction representative from Reconciling Ministries Network, and their work helping to bring about full inclusion within the United Methodist Church. Helen will share their perspective about what may come from General Conference 2024 and how we can be engaging in the work of Reconciling Ministries.



SERVE DAY

SATURDAY, APRIL 15, 9:00AM – 12:00PM

Join us as we partner with Urban Ministry to make a difference in the city of Birmingham. First Church will have the opportunity to help a family pull together the finishing touches on the outside of their house by painting. If you are interested in serving please contact Ashley Hess at Ashley@firstchurchbhm.com

CITY KIDS UPDATES

4.22 | EARTH DAY STORYTIME, PLAYTIME, & CREEK STOMP
10:00AM AT MCCALLUM PARK IN VESTAVIA
(3332 ROSEMARY LANE)

5.6 | ENCHANTED FAIRY GARDEN MORNING
AT OAK MOUNTAIN STATE PARK - 10:00AM
(MEET AT THE INTERPRETIVE CENTER)

All are invited to explore the trail and bring materials to add a fairy home to the site. We'll have a story time and playtime as well.

4.28 | THE BRIDGE - BARONS GAME
6:45PM AT REGIONS FIELD

This is a crossover event with our Student Ministry for those in 4th - 7th grades. Meet at the 14th St. N entrance to Regions Field at 6:45pm with Ashley, Cristin, and volunteers. While the tickets will be free, bring money for whatever food you might want! RSVP is required so that we can pre-order tickets and invite your friends! Click [HERE](#) to sign up.

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.

YOUTH MINISTRY

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

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Grades 6th - 12th are invited to join in a fun afternoon of team building as we try to escape from Breakout's Mystery Mansion and Clue rooms on Sunday, April 16. Students will meet in the Large Dining Room after worship and we will travel to Mellow Mushroom for lunch. The cost of this event is FREE! Please click [HERE](#) to save your spot.

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SAVE THE DATES

FOR THESE SUMMER YOUTH EVENTS:

Thursday, June 1
SPRING VALLEY BEACH

Tuesday, June 6 - Wednesday, June 7
BRAVES GAME & SIX FLAGS

Monday, June 19 - Thursday, June 22
YOUTH SERVE WEEK

Wednesday, June 28
YAK THE CREEK

Friday, July 21 - Monday, July 24
SUMMER BEACH TRIP



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.

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY CLASS

All are welcome to join the Sunday Morning Bible Study class for a discussion of the Book of Job led by Duncan Blair and Trudy Loop beginning Sunday, April 16. The class meets in the Library on the first floor of the Education Building. Please contact Stephen Smith for more information at stephenbsmith@gmail.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