

SEPTEMBER 2023

CONNECTIONS

MAKING THE COMMITMENT

The **Flow** *of* **Money**

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19 “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Matthew 6:19-21 NIV

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Money is a part of our everyday lives and often drives our decisions and goals, yet it only has capacity to carry the values and purpose we give to it. Too often we unconsciously absorb the values and ideas of our present culture without considering the truer values of our faith. As people made in the image of an abundantly generous Creator, we are called to consider how our faith invites us to live with, use, and direct the flow of money. In this series we will consider how to allow the resources to which we have access carry our values and commitments forward for a better life for ALL.

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S E P T E M B E R 1 0

Our Relationship with Money

LUKE 15:8-10, LUKE 18:18-30

S E P T E M B E R 1 7

The Myths We Believe about Money

MATTHEW 25:14-30, LUKE 16:1-13

S E P T E M B E R 2 4

What We Appreciate Appreciates

LUKE 21:1-4, LUKE 19:1-10

Stewardship

T W E N T Y T W E N T Y F O U R

*When you let go of trying to get more of what you don't really need,
it frees up oceans of energy to make a difference with what you have.
When you make a difference with what you have, it expands.*

- Lynne Twist

The culmination of our Flow of Money stewardship season will be Sunday, September 24 when together as a church family we will pledge our financial resources for the ministry and mission of our beloved church. You are invited to bring your pledge card with you to worship that Sunday or to fill out your pledge card online prior to that day.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT STEWARDSHIP [CLICK HERE.](#)

TO FILL OUT YOUR 2024 PLEDGE CARD [CLICK HERE.](#)

ALL IN

Clean Up Day

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9 AT 9:00AM

As many of you are aware, we just wrapped up the sermon series "All In" where we asked each of you to make a commitment to showing up and serving more here at First Church. One of the ways you can do that is by helping at our next clean-up day. On **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9**, we are asking folks to come volunteer and help us clean out. We will meet at 9:00am in the Courtyard to disperse into the different areas in which we will be working. This will help every ministry at First Church as well as keep our campus beautiful. We hope to see you on our All In Clean Up Day.

Getting To KNOW US Dinner

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 AT 6:00PM IN THE LARGE DINING ROOM

If you have been visiting with us at First Church, have recently joined First Church, or are interested in learning more, you are invited to join us for a meal together around the table. We will gather at 6:00pm on Thursday, September 21 in the Large Dining Room for good food and fellowship. Childcare is available with a reservation made by Friday, September 15.

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

Wednesday Night **DINNER & PROGRAMMING**

We are continuing our Wednesday Night Dinners this fall through the start of Advent. Dinner will begin at 5:00pm with programming to follow at 6:00pm. You can find the menu for the rest of the fall and register for more dinners [HERE](#). You are welcome to register for the entire fall season all at once, for a month at a time, or from week to week as you are able to join us. All reservations are due the Monday prior at noon.

W E D N E S D A Y N I G H T

SMALL GROUPS

After our Trivia Night on Wednesday, September 6, we will begin a new round of small groups on Wednesday evenings. All of our groups (with the exception of choir) run from 6:00pm - 7:15pm alongside our programming for children and youth. We invite you to find a group that fits your interests. Click [HERE](#) to sign up now.

THE SOUL OF MONEY LED BY ROSIE STAFFORD SMITH

SALT CLASSROOM ON THE BOTTOM FLOOR OF THE EDUCATION BUILDING

What do we really believe about money—as individuals, as a society, and as a faith community? These beliefs shape us more than we might realize. Join us for a three-week journey exploring our personal relationship with money and the ideas of wealth, stewardship, and abundance. Sessions will be informed by the teachings of Lynne Twist's book *The Soul of Money* and First Church's Annual Stewardship booklet. Please bring your stewardship booklet/journal each week.

JUSTICE AND MERCY LED BY FIRST CHURCH MINISTRY PARTNERS

ECCLESIA-WINGARD CLASSROOM ON THE BOTTOM FLOOR OF THE EDUCATION BUILDING

You are invited to come and hear about the work that three of our ministry partners are doing in the Birmingham community. Faith in Action Alabama, Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice, and Greater Birmingham Ministries will share with us all of the work they are doing locally and how you can get involved. Come and find out how these ministries are using the money First Church gives to support those most in need.

GAME ON! LED BY SHAY GIBSON

LARGE DINING ROOM

Calling all board gamers! This group is for anyone who loves Scrabble, Codenames, and Catan – or anyone who is interested in learning how to play . Each week all three games will be out and anyone who wants to play can do so. All the games should take roughly an hour to play. Come with your game face on and ready to have a blast!

ONGOING WEDNESDAY NIGHT **SMALL GROUPS**

CONVERGE MIDWEEK: A YOUNG ADULT GROUP

LED BY JONATHAN GOSS

PARLOR IN THE OFFICE BUILDING

Converge Midweek is an ongoing small group for young adults at First Church that is open and welcoming. We begin each meeting by checking in with one another and then have guided conversation on a variety of topics. Conversations can focus on books of the Bible, a video series, or a book series. There is no "homework" that needs to be done before attending. Just show up and know that you belong.

OPEN TABLE

LED BY JAKE HAYNES

IRL ON THE SECOND FLOOR OF THE EDUCATION BUILDING

In this small group we will make space for an LGBTQ+ centered look at spiritual connections, the Bible, and faith through a combination of open discussion and guided conversations. This group is LGBTQ+ led and is open to all but will center around the LGBTQ+ community's experience.

FIRST CHURCH CHANCEL CHOIR

LED BY DR. PATRICK EVANS

IN THE SANCTUARY

WEDNESDAYS FROM 6:30PM - 8:00PM

**NOTE THE DIFFERENCE IN TIME*

If you've been looking to join the First Church choir, now is your chance! Come and join us for practice as we meet each Wednesday evening to rehearse and prepare to lead in worship in the Sanctuary each Sunday morning.



TRIVIA NIGHT

SEPTEMBER 6 AT 6:00PM IN THE LOFT

Join us on Wednesday, September 6 for a night of quizzing questions and a tricky trivia game! We'll gather in the Loft after dinner to play several rounds of trivia led by our wonderful game hosts. Everyone will be divided into groups and will work as a team to play and win prizes. No registration is required for trivia and it is free to play! Youth are invited to join in trivia. Programming for children will take place as usual on the CityKids hall as well as nursery care.

PANAMA

LEARN AND SERVE

TWENTY TWENTY FOUR

INTEREST MEETING

You are invited to join us on **SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10** in the Parlor for the first interest meeting for Panama 2024. This is an informational meeting to learn more of what a trip with the learn and serve team to Panama is all about. Please email Jonathan at Jonathan@firstchurchbirmingham.com if you are interested in attending or have any questions.

Save
the
Date
FEBRUARY 9-11, 2024

TWENTY TWENTY FOUR
CHURCH-WIDE RETREAT

Save the date for our church-wide retreat
February 9-11. This year's theme is
PARADOX: WHEN LOSS IS GAIN.
There will be activities for children, youth,
and adults . . . including Karaoke!
Go ahead and mark your calendars now.

**TAP YOUR
TROUBLES AWAY**
TAP DANCE CLASSES

LED BY KATHY DRAPER

MONDAY EVENINGS BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 11 IN THE LOFT

Come join us in the LOFT for Tap Dancing fun and exercise! Classes begin on Monday, September 11 and are free of charge. They will continue on Monday nights through the end of October and will pick back up again in January. Absolutely no tap dance or any type of previous dance experience required. Ages 13 and up are welcome.

To register, click [**HERE**](#). Class levels and times are:
Beginner/low intermediate: 5:45pm - 6:45pm
Intermediate: 6:50pm - 7:50pm

FIRST CHURCH Community: groups

It's that time again! Every fall, we re-launch our community groups to include interested newcomers and anyone looking for community. Dinner Groups and Life Groups provide a sense of fellowship and encourage deeper connection within our congregation. These groups meet every month or every couple of weeks depending on the group's preference. If you're interested in learning more about our community groups, you can read more on our website [HERE](#). If you are interested in participating in a community group this fall, please fill out our online form [HERE](#).

GIVING BASKET PROJECT

During the month of September you are invited to donate supplies for the Birmingham Firehouse Homeless Shelter. Firehouse Ministries serves more chronically homeless men than any agency in the state of Alabama. Founded in 1983, they operate a comprehensive continuum of services for those experiencing homelessness in Birmingham and surrounding areas. Firehouse Shelter offers meals, employment readiness, literacy skills, life training skills, and a clothing closet to approximately 5,000 of our city's citizens yearly.

Please consider giving an item(s) from the following list:

**TRAVEL SIZE TOILETRIES
DEODORANT**

INDIVIDUAL CONDIMENT PACKAGES (CAN BE FOUND AT SAM'S)

**INDIVIDUALLY WRAPPED SNACK ITEMS
SOCKS**

JUSTICE & MERCY

SAVE THE DATES FOR THE FOLLOWING JUSTICE & MERCY SERVE DAYS – IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN JOINING IN OR LEARNING MORE, PLEASE CONTACT ASHLEY HESS AT ASHLEY@FIRSTCHURCHBHM.COM.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16 from 9:00am - 12:00pm - Urban Ministry Serve Day

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15 at 4:00pm - Domestic Violence Training hosted by One Place

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12 - Worship and lunch preparation at Church of the Reconciler

Passages of the Bible CRUISE

IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO MAKE PLANS TO JOIN US ON OUR PASSAGES OF THE BIBLE CRUISE IN OCTOBER 2024. WE HAVE CLOSE TO 45 PEOPLE SIGNED UP TO JOIN US ON OUR ONCE IN A LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN WITH FELLOW UNITED METHODISTS FROM TRINITY UMC (HOMEWOOD) AND GRACE UMC (LIBERTY PARK) TO EXPLORE THE WONDER OF ISRAEL, EGYPT, GREECE, AND TURKEY FOR 10 NIGHTS ABOARD THE NORWEGIAN GETAWAY. REGISTER WITH HOST ID# 61708 BY OCTOBER 7 TO RECEIVE A \$100 DISCOUNT

CLICK [HERE](#) TO LEARN MORE AND SIGN UP NOW.

THE BRIDGE

at the **BARONS GAME**

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8 AT 7:00PM

Students in 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th grades are invited to join us for a night of fun at a Barons baseball game. Students will need money for food and drinks — bring a friend and join us. Click [**HERE**](#) to sign up today.

CITY KIDS UPDATES

TODDLERS SING IN WORSHIP

SEPTEMBER 24 | 11:00 AM

Kids in our 2K-4K Nursery Class have been practicing “Peace Like a River” and will sing in worship to conclude our Stewardship Celebration. Families will receive more information from Cristin with the song and details.

MOMS' NIGHT OUT

SEPTEMBER 28 | 7:00PM | SOL AZTECA

Moms and Mom-Figures are invited to a night away for a fun dinner. No need to rsvp, no need to dress up - come join us!

WEDNESDAY NIGHT PROGRAMMING

THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER

Jesus' BFFs - This month we will look at the people who were closest to Jesus during his time on earth and make lots of friendship crafts. We hope to see our 4K - 5th Grade students each Wednesday Night

YOUTH MINISTRY

AT FIRST CHURCH

YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL

STUDENTS MAKE PLANS TO JOIN US FOR A FUN HOUR OF SUNDAY SCHOOL ON SEPTEMBER 10 AS WE START A NEW SERIES "NO PROBLEMS" WHICH WILL TAKE A DEEPER LOOK ON WHAT LOVING OTHERS LOOKS LIKE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT!

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MDWK HANG

MAKE PLANS TO JOIN US FOR THE MDWK HANG ON WEDNESDAY NIGHTS AT 6:00PM. STUDENTS WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PLAY GAMES, HAVE SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS, AND CONNECT WITH OTHER YOUTH! WHO DOESN'T LOVE COVERING THEIR FACE WITH WHIP CREAM AND HAVING CHEETOS TOSSED AT THEIR HEAD?!? THIS IS WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM THE MDWK HANG! #BETHEREORBESQUARE #YOUTHGROUP

SAVE THE DATES

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9.17 | LUNCH AND SCAVENGER HUNT

CLICK [HERE](#) TO REGISTER YOUR STUDENT FOR THIS FREE EVENT!

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10.8 | BIRMINGHAM LEGION SOCCER GAME

CLICK [HERE](#) TO REGISTER YOUR STUDENT FOR THIS FREE EVENT!

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10.29 | FALL FEST

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11.12 | PROGRESSIVE DINNER

CLICK [HERE](#) TO REGISTER YOUR STUDENT FOR THIS FREE EVENT!

AS WE SEEK TO BE AN OPEN PLACE FOR ALL

MY PRAYER FOR FIRST CHURCH IS:

That the church will grow in its openness, diversity, and fearless spirit of inquiry – modeling love for all people and for our planet.

- Mark Schantz

That it will continue to be a place of acceptance, a place of hope, a place where everyone feels deserving of God's love.

- Allison Rice

That it will continue to encourage inclusivity in all aspects and be a shining example of Christ's love for ALL.

- Kelsy Rice

Continue to be open to all.

- Chere Flanagan

Spread the word, through commitment to openness to all.

- Burton Flanagan

God as we seek to love the people around us and fulfill what you have called us to do, would you continue to lead us, give us wisdom and discernment to listen to your voice, follow your Holy Spirit, and do your will. Let us continue to be a refuge for people to find and encounter you, be equipped to follow their own paths and empowered to engage with the world around them. Amen.

- JC Powell





UPDATE YOUR **CONTACT** **INFORMATION**

We know a lot can change over time. 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

WEDNESDAYS

- 5:00pm: Dinner
- 5:30pm: Nursery Open
- 6:00pm: Small Group Programming
- 6:30pm: Choir

SUNDAYS

- 9:00am: Virtual Live Stream Service
- 9:45am: Sunday School
- 11:00am: Loft & Sanctuary In Person Worship

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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