

OCTOBER 2023

# CONNECTIONS



WELCOME  
FALL

# FALL FESTIVE-ALL

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29 AT 4:00PM

**COME ONE, COME ALL, TO THE FALL FESTIVE-ALL! OUR ANNUAL FALL FESTIVAL IS RETURNING ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29 AND YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS OUT ON ALL THE FUN. WE'LL HAVE GAMES, CANDY, HOT DOGS, COTTON CANDY, A COSTUME CONTEST, CAKE WALK, AND SO MUCH MORE. CLICK [HERE](#) FOR MORE INFORMATION.**

**IN ADDITION TO JOINING US FOR THE FUN, WE NEED BOOTHS! EVERY YEAR, SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES, DINNER GROUPS, ETC. REGISTER TO HOST A BOOTH AT THE FESTIVAL. THIS CAN RANGE FROM A THEMED BOOTH WITH CANDY OR SNACKS, A BOOTH WITH CRAFTS, OR EVEN A BOOTH WITH INTERACTIVE GAMES AND PRIZES! CLICK [HERE](#) TO LEARN MORE AND REGISTER YOUR BOOTH NOW.**



## WORLD COMMUNION

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1 AT 11:00AM | IN THE LOFT & SANCTUARY SERVICES

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ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1 WE WILL CELEBRATE WORLD COMMUNION – A TIME WHEN CHRISTIANS ACROSS THE GLOBE COME TOGETHER AROUND THE TABLE TO REMEMBER WHO WE ARE, TO WHOM WE BELONG, AND OUR DREAMS FOR A BETTER WORLD TOGETHER. AT THE TABLE WE RE-MEMBER OURSELVES AND OTHERS, RECOGNIZING WE ARE ONE AND NOT DIVIDED. WE SHARE OUR RESOURCES FOR LIFE AND CELEBRATE OUR CONNECTION AS WE SEEK TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

# THE BELOVED COMMUNITY:

**Living in the Right Relationship with Self, Others, & God**

*Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence*

Matthew 23:25

Jesus didn't mess around when it came to hypocrisy. The ones who got Jesus's blood pumping the most were the religious leaders who said all of the right words and knew scripture by heart but kept people from experiencing God in tangible ways. The Pharisees could correctly identify their values but had great difficulty embodying them in their organizational policy and relationships. In this sermon series we will seek to uncover our values centered in Christ as we explore how to live them out with integrity.

OCTOBER 8

## THE VALUES OF CHRIST

MATTHEW 5:1-16, MATTHEW 7:12

OCTOBER 15

## HONOR AND MORAL COURAGE

MARK 3:1-6, JOHN 18:1-11

OCTOBER 22

## HUMILITY AND HELPFULNESS

JOHN 13:1-10, MATTHEW 25:31-46

OCTOBER 29

## INTEGRITY IN ACTION

LUKE 10:25-37, MATTHEW 23:25-28

# Grateful For Your **FINANCIAL COMMITMENT** To First Church

*In September our stewardship campaign came to a culmination as the First Church family turned in their 2024 pledge cards. Our pledges are more than a symbol – they are the evidence of the flow of money we have as a community and our collective desire to use our gifts for greater good. Thank you for choosing to imbue your financial resources with your values and direct them towards serving others along with yourself. If you have not yet made your pledge for 2024 click [HERE](#) now.*

## Wednesday Night **DINNER & PROGRAMMING**

**Our Wednesday night dinner and programming continues this month with dinner at 5:00pm followed by programming at 6:00pm. A reminder that dinner reservations are due each Monday at 12:00pm.**

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

# GOURD IS | GOURD IS GREAT | GOOD PUMPKIN PAINTING

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4 AT 6:00PM

AS FALL APPROACHES, WE WANT TO MAKE SURE YOU HAVE DECORATIVE PUMPKINS TO PUT ON DISPLAY! JOIN US ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4 AFTER DINNER FOR A NIGHT OF GOURD OL' PUMPKIN PAINTING. REGISTRATION FOR THIS EVENT IS REQUIRED BY MONDAY, OCTOBER 2 AT 12:00PM SO THAT WE CAN MAKE SURE WE HAVE ENOUGH SUPPLIES. THE COST WILL VARY ACCORDING TO THE SIZE OF PUMPKIN YOU WANT TO PAINT - LARGE PUMPKINS ARE \$5 AND SMALL PUMPKINS ARE \$3. [CLICK HERE](#) TO REGISTER NOW.

W E D N E S D A Y   N I G H T

# SMALL GROUPS

You're invited to join us for one of our October small groups. Registrations are encouraged so that we can help prepare our spaces for the number of people in each group as well as share any necessary instructions before the group meets each week. Below is a brief listing of our October small groups, click [HERE](#) for more detailed information. Click [HERE](#) register now.

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## ***THE UNIVERSAL CHRIST: A BOOK STUDY***

LED BY REV. STEPHANIE YORK ARNOLD

*OCTOBER 11 - 25 | 6:00PM-7:00PM | IN THE SALT CLASSROOM*

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## **HOW GREAT THOU (CREATIVE) ART!**

LED BY CALEB CLARK, KATIE JUSTICE, AND JUSTIN BANGER

*OCTOBER 11 - 25 | 6:00PM - 7:00PM | IN THE LARGE DINING ROOM*

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## ***EXPLORING HOW MUSIC INSPIRES OUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS, BONO'S MEMOIR***

LED BY HANNA SCHOCK & PATRICK REED

*OCTOBER 11 - NOVEMBER 29 | 6:00PM - 7:00PM | IN THE ECCLESIA-WINGARD CLASSROOM*

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## RECURRING WEDNESDAY NIGHT **SMALL GROUPS**

### **MDWK STUDENT MINISTRY**

6:00pm - 7:00pm in the Youth Room (BASEMENT OF THE SANCTUARY BUILDING)

### **CITYKIDS**

6:00pm - 7:00pm in the CityKids wing (2ND FLOOR OF THE EDUCATION BUILDING)

### **OPEN TABLE**

6:00pm - 7:00pm in the IRL Classroom (2ND FLOOR OF THE EDUCATION BUILDING)

### **CONVERGE**

6:00pm - 7:00pm in the Parlor (1ST FLOOR OF THE OFFICE BUILDING)

### **FIRST CHURCH CHANCEL CHOIR**

6:30pm - 8:00pm in the Choir Room (SANCTUARY BUILDING)

# Brews & BROS

**“FELLA-SHIP” GROUP**

LED BY REV. JONATHAN GOSS

THURSDAYS, OCTOBER 5 - OCTOBER 26 | 6:30PM-8:00PM

AT CARRIGAN'S BEER GARDEN (2910 6TH AVE S)

We live in a culture that often promotes a form of masculinity that is seen as tough, powerful, and emotionless. At First Church, we believe strength is shown by those that are willing to be vulnerable, share their feelings, and participate in a community that supports one another. In the small group Brews & Bros, we will create an intentional space for those male-identifying persons to share with one another and explore how God is calling us to redefine masculinity in today's world. Click [HERE](#) to read more and sign up now.

## TWENTY TWENTY FOUR CHURCH-WIDE RETREAT

Join us at the beautiful Camp McDowell for our churchwide retreat February 9-11, 2024. Our theme this year is "Paradox: Where Loss is Gain." Cost for the retreat is \$200 for individuals, \$400 for couples, and \$450 for families. Families in need of an extra room can reserve one for an additional \$100. For questions about registration or scholarship opportunities, please email [Katherine@firstchurchbhm.com](mailto:Katherine@firstchurchbhm.com).

A deposit of \$50 is due upon registration. Click [HERE](#) to register today.



You are invited to join us for an educational experience presented by our ministry partner, One Place, on Sunday, October 15 at 4:00pm in the Loft. Everyone is encouraged to attend as we will learn how domestic violence is affecting our community, talk about ways to identify abusive situations, and share resources available for those seeking help. We hope you will join us as we lean into our priorities of doing justice and embracing tough questions as we listen and learn from One Place.

# SERVE DAY

## WITH CHURCH OF THE RECONCILER

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15

**SAVE THE DATE!** On Sunday, November 15 our Justice and Mercy Team will worship with the Church of the Reconciler and serve their community meal afterward. Volunteers are needed to help serve and cook portions of the meal.

If you would like more information about serving please reach out to [Ashley@firstchurchbhm.com](mailto:Ashley@firstchurchbhm.com).





# PROJECT 12.25

We know that the Christmas season can be a financially challenging time for many people. Over the past several years, Project 12/25 has supported First Church families in need. Last year we raised funds to help support housing and salary for JoAnn at Community on the Rise. This year we have the opportunity to support our wider community through Greater Birmingham Ministries, an organization that services over 200 families in the Birmingham area with Christmas gifts for children. Our goal as a church is to sponsor 25 kids from GBM's Christmas list to help provide a fun and happy Christmas for those in our community. More information will be coming about how to participate in this year's project.

## **MULTI-GENERATIONAL TRIP** WITH **APPALACHIA SERVICE PROJECT**

Are you looking to have an experience of a lifetime? During Spring Break, March 24-29, 2024, you are invited to join a multi-generation team to serve and learn in Jonesville, Virginia. This will be an amazing opportunity for our youngest and oldest members to work with an established organization and bring relief to a city in the United States that is in need. Appalachia Service Project (ASP) will guide our team as we tackle four days of construction projects that will lead to improved living conditions for many people in the city of Jonesville. Click [HERE](#) to learn more.

# ALL SAINTS

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5 AT 11:00AM  
IN THE LOFT AND SANCTUARY SERVICES**

We will celebrate All Saints both virtually and in-person on Sunday, November 5. In each worship experience we will call the names of those who have died in the last 12 months as we celebrate their continual love and presence in our lives. While we will share the names of all church members who have passed, we also invite you to share the names of others who may not have been First Church members but you would like to have included in our service. If you have lost a loved one in the last 12 months, we invite you to send their name and a photo to Peg Thompson at [Peg@firstchurchbhm.com](mailto:Peg@firstchurchbhm.com) by Tuesday, October 24 so that they might be included in this year's celebration of our beloved saints.



FIRST CHURCH BIRMINGHAM ANNUAL

# CHARGE CONFERENCE

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19

AFTER 11:00AM WORSHIP IN THE SANCTUARY

Every year we gather as a community of faith to celebrate all that we have accomplished in the past year, nominate and approve new lay leadership, as well as ratify parts of our annual operating budget. On Sunday, November 19 our District Superintendent, Rick Owen, will join us in worship in the Sanctuary and then, following worship, we will hold our annual Charge Conference in the Sanctuary. All are welcome to attend. We will plan to offer a state of church address and share lay leadership plans for 2023. We hope you will make plans to attend.

## GENERAL CONFERENCE UPDATES

If you are interested in receiving updates about General Conference 2024 you can sign up for a regular newsletter from Mainstream UMC. Mainstream UMC is a United Methodist advocacy group working for unity in the Body of Christ. They are committed to the regionalization of the UMC, the removal of the harmful language from the Book of Discipline that targets our LGBTQ siblings, and the fresh, Global Social Principles. Click [HERE](#) to read more.

# ALL IN

## FULLY ENGAGED DISCIPLES

In September we spent time in worship talking about our call to be "All In" as First Church continues to grow and expand. If you have not yet filled out our All In form, we invite you to click [HERE](#) to let us know where you plan to serve in the coming year. Even if you have already committed to serve in a particular area, we invite you to fill out the form as it contains important information about your skills and experience that will be helpful as we build our ministry and leadership teams.

## CITY KIDS UPDATES

**MOMS' NIGHT OUT**  
OCTOBER 10

**PARK POP-UP!**  
OCTOBER 22  
10:00AM AT CITYWALK

# YOUTH UPDATES

## YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL

9:45AM ON SUNDAYS IN THE YOUTH ROOM

DURING THE MONTH OF OCTOBER WE WILL LOOK AT WHAT SCRIPTURE HAS TO SAY ABOUT LEADERSHIP IN A SERIES CALLED "MOST LIKELY TO..."

## OCTOBER YOUTH OUTING BIRMINGHAM LEGION SOCCER GAME

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 8 AT 3:30PM AT PROTECTIVE STADIUM

CLICK [HERE](#) TO READ MORE AND REGISTER YOUR STUDENT.

## NOVEMBER YOUTH OUTING PROGRESSIVE DINNER

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12 AT 3:00PM, BEGINNING IN THE FIRST CHURCH PARKING LOT

CLICK [HERE](#) TO READ MORE AND REGISTER FOR THIS FREE EVENT.

## STUDENT VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR FALL FESTIVE-ALL

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29

IF YOU LOVE DRESSING UP AND HAVING FUN THIS IS YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE. STUDENTS, THIS IS YOUR TIME TO BE "ALL IN." FALL FEST IS OCTOBER 29 AND I NEED YOUR HELP SERVING AT THE YOUTH BOOTH. CLICK [HERE](#) TO RESERVE YOUR VOLUNTEER TIME SLOT.

# AS WE SEEK TO BE AN OPEN PLACE FOR ALL

*MY PRAYER FOR FIRST CHURCH IS:*

*I pray we will all grow spiritually as a community.*

*- Terry Schrimsher*

*That we see and respond to those who are silently struggling*

*- Judy and Johnny Miller*

*For our hearts to be filled with compassion and empathy, so that we may truly listen to others, learn from their experiences, and embrace their perspectives. May we be quick to uplift marginalized voices, ensuring all are valued and loved.*

*- Cydni Taylor*

*We continue to be a hospitable and nurturing place so that all may come to know the immense love of Christ.*

*- Gretchen Vandiver and Ashley Love*

*To be an example of humility in order to continually unlearn and learn a more Christlike view of ourselves and others. To buck the religious trend of tribalism and strive to unite rather than exclude (as Richard Rohr says - include and transcend).*

*- Brendon and Laura Pinola*





# 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](mailto: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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