

NOVEMBER 2023

CONNECTIONS

WITH GRATEFUL
HEARTS

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.



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 2024. We hope you will make plans to attend.

GOD ^{IN} THE VALLEY

NOVEMBER SERMON SERIES

WE ARE A HURTING PEOPLE AND OUR PAIN OFTEN STEMS FROM THE HURT AND SUFFERING OF THIS WORLD. STRENGTH IS NOT FOUND IN BOTTLING OUR FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS UP INSIDE. RATHER SHARING THE PEAKS AND VALLEYS OF LIFE IS HOW GOD HAS CALLED US TO BE IN COMMUNITY WITH ONE ANOTHER. IN THIS SERIES, GOD IN THE VALLEY, WE WILL JOURNEY TOGETHER IN THE DEPTHS OF LIFE'S MOST CHALLENGING PLACES, SO THAT WE MAY LOVE AND SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER. WE WILL CLING TO THE WORDS OF PSALM 23, "FOR YOU ARE WITH ME: YOUR ROD AND YOUR STAFF – THEY COMFORT ME."

11.5.23 | GRIEF (ALL SAINTS)

PSALM 23, MATTHEW 11:28-30, MARK 5:21-43

11.12.23 | ADDICTION

PSALM 23, HEBREWS 4:15-16, JAMES 1:12-17

11.19.23 | RELIGIOUS TRAUMA

PSALM 23, MATTHEW 7:1-6, JOHN 3:31-36, MATTHEW 13:47-50, MATTHEW 25:31-46

11.26.23 | SUICIDE

PSALM 23, MATTHEW 14:15-41, PSALM 34:17-19

CLICK [HERE](#) TO READ MORE.

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.

We will launch a new round of small groups in the month of November. Registrations are encouraged as we want to prepare for the number of people in each group and communicate any instructions that may be necessary.

There will be NO Wednesday Night Dinner & Programming on November 1 or November 22

Click [HERE](#) to read more about our November Small Groups and click [HERE](#) to register.

2024 CHURCHWIDE RETREAT

PARADOX

WHEN LOSS IS GAIN

FEBRUARY 9 - 11 AT CAMP MCDOWELL

Our Christian faith teaches us that even in our suffering there is something being born anew. In his book *Falling Upward*, Richard Rohr explores our human journey from the first-half of our life to the second-half. This weekend we will explore the ways life invites us to release our need for rules, being "good enough," and climbing the ladder. We will look at the archetypal "Hero/Heroine's Journey" to see that inevitable losses in life have the ability to lead us to a more liberating second-half where we release our grip on control and lean into acceptance. In addition to our time of studying and learning together there will be plenty of time for rest and play as well.

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

Bible Study

Sunday School Class

The Sunday Morning Bible Study Class will begin a new discussion series on Sunday, November 12 focused on the history of the Maccabean Revolt and the resulting Hasmonean Dynasty in the 1st and 2nd centuries B.C.E. These stories are told in the apocryphal Books of Maccabees as well as the writings of the Roman-Jewish historian Flavius Josephus. This historical period includes the origins of the story of Hanukkah and provides us with insight into the development of Judaism during the broader Second Temple Period, including the time of Jesus. All are welcome to join in this series, which we expect will run until the end of the year. Please contact Stephen Smith at stephenbsmith@gmail.com for more information.

LAY LEADERSHIP NOMINATIONS FOR 2024

This slate of leaders has been prayerfully vetted by our Nominations Team and Pastors. They are all active members striving to represent our congregation's wide diversity. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact our Lay Leader, David Olsen or Senior Pastor, Stephanie York Arnold. These members will be voted on to serve at Charge Conference following worship on November 19, 2023.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Chair: Jennifer Waters
Lay Representative to Annual Conference: Alie B. Gorrie
Chair of Staff-Parish Relations: Sally Bowers
Treasurer: Ralph Jolly
Lay Leader: David Olsen
Chair of Trustees: Larry Caine
Chair of Finance: Bill McMullen
Class of 2024: Erika Jobes and Jill Rogers
Class of 2025: Justin Banger and Melany Morgan
Class of 2026: Valerie Collins Thomas and Dallas Vice

STAFF-PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Chair: Sally Bowers
Class of 2024: Rick deShazo, Elena Harmon Wisse, Sally Bowers
Class of 2025: Herb Robertson, Muriel Thompson, Avery Perry
Class of 2026: Janet Voorhees, Bill Schock, Darrell Fielder
Lay Representative to Annual Conference: Beth Curry
Lay Leader: David Olsen

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Class of 2024: Larry Caine, Shea Hess, Melissa Price
Class of 2025: Sandy Lawrence, David Ansardi, Tom McMillan
Class of 2026: Johnny Miller, Shay Gibson, Jordan Pittman

INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

Chair: Thomas Waters
Treasurer: Ralph Jolly,
Trustee Representative: Will be nominated by Trustees
Class of 2024: Jodi Kortman
Class of 2026: Chris Akins

LAY REPRESENTATIVES TO THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Class of 2024: Beth Curry

Class of 2025: Alie B. Gorrie

FINANCE

Finance Chair: Bill McMullen (2025)

Treasurer: Ralph Jolly

Business Administrator: Steve Pitts

Class of 2024: Rosie Stafford Smith and Kyle Holloway

Class of 2025: Ben Shepherd

Class of 2026: Laura Pinola

BIRMINGHAM EARLY LEARNING CENTER

Chair: Cale Smith 2024

Trustee Representative: David Ansardi (2025)

ELC at large member: Christina Burgunder (2024)

ELC at large member: Nicole Caudell (2025)

FUMC at large member: Julie Caine (2024)

FUMC at large member: Brett Wisse (2025)

FUMC at large member: Fran Burgan (2026)

ELC Parent Committee Chair: Kendall Hagood

ELC Director: Cassandra Copeland

ELC Accountant: Susan Ragland

Executive Pastor: Katie Gilbert

Children's Minister: Cristin Dedmon

COMMITTEE ON LAY LEADERSHIP NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Lay Leader: David Olsen

Class of 2024: Katherine Simmons, Bert Pitts, Dejuana McCary

Class of 2025: Art Wimberly, John Bailey, Marnie Brown

Class of 2026: Determined by Executive Council

FIRST CHURCH FOUNDATION

Chair: Adam Burgunder

Former Lay Leader: Andy Wallace

Lay Leader: David Olsen

Trustee Chair: Larry Caine

Finance Chair: Bill McMullen

At Large: Bernie Hardy

At Large: Shay Gibson

At Large: Renee Harmon

At Large: Kevin Voorhees

SPRC Chair: Sally Bowers

Former EC Chair: Mychal Boyd

EC Chair: Jennifer Waters

2023 ADVENT CALENDAR

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3

11:00AM - FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT IN THE SANCTUARY & LOFT

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6

5:00PM - WEDNESDAY NIGHT DINNER (LARGE DINING ROOM)

6:00PM - THE BIG ADVENT EVENT (LARGE DINING ROOM)

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10

11:00AM - SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT IN THE SANCTUARY & LOFT

12:00PM - COOKIES & COCOA (COURTYARD)

4:00PM - BEERS & CAROLS (HI WIRE BREWING)

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17

11:00AM - THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT IN THE SANCTUARY & LOFT

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21

6:00PM - LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE (SANCTUARY)

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24

11:00AM - FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT IN THE SANCTUARY (ONE SERVICE ONLY)

4:00PM - CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE (THE LOFT)

6:00PM - CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE (SANCTUARY)

THE

BIG

ADVENT EVENT

DECEMBER 6 AT 6:00PM IN THE LARGE DINING ROOM

All ages are invited to a church-wide Advent wreath-making and crafty Christmas party! What's better than a night of Christmas crafts with friends? We'll be guided in creating an Advent wreath which can be taken home to use for the season. We'll also learn to make a few special crafts which we can use yearly in our decorations. Adults are invited to register [HERE](#) for the event - there is a fee that covers the wreath and craft supplies. We hope you make plans to attend!



ADVENT *Decorations*

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 26, AFTER WORSHIP



Join your church family after worship to help decorate our church for Advent. You are welcome to bring a lunch from home if you choose and then help us get to work adorning our church for Advent. The Sanctuary, Loft, and Welcome Center will have trees, bows, garland, and wreaths to be hung. With many hands this work is easier, more fun, and finished before 2:30pm.



CHRISTMAS EVE AMARYLLIS FLOWERS

This Advent season you have the opportunity to remember or honor a loved one by purchasing a beautiful amaryllis to decorate our altar on Christmas Eve. You are invited to take your amaryllis home with you at the conclusion of worship on Christmas Eve. Flowers are available for \$20 each. We will be taking orders until we run out or until the end of the day Sunday, December 10.

Click [HERE](#) to place your order now.



PROJECT 12.25

As the holiday season approaches, our hearts are filled with the spirit of giving and there is no better way to embrace this spirit than by supporting Project 12/25. This year we will partner with Greater Birmingham Ministries as they seek to provide a memorable Christmas for 200 families. One of the ways that GBM seeks to empower those they serve is by offering gifts and clothing in a store where parents are able to shop for their own children rather than receive a hand out from someone else. In the spirit of community and compassion, First Church Birmingham will help ensure that GBM is able to meet their goal of 200 families as well as offer dignity and honor to those in need during this season.

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**WITH YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT,
WE CAN MAKE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT IN THESE FAMILIES' LIVES.
WE ARE CALLING UPON OUR CONGREGATION TO MAKE PROJECT 12/25 A SUCCESS.**

HERE IS HOW YOU CAN HELP:

Pull a tag off the Christmas tree in the Welcome Center.

Each tag will share a child's age and category to purchase a gift to be included in GBM's distribution.

Return your gifts to the church by December 10.

Make a financial contribution to Project 12/25.

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For more information please contact Ashley Hess @ashley@firstchurchbhm.com

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.

Grateful For Our
CONTINUED IMPACT

*Thank you, First Church, so far 216 pledges
have been made for a total of \$1,061,958.*

Click [HERE](#) for more information

CITYKIDS UPDATES

MOMS' NIGHT OUT

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7 AT 7:00 PM | LOS AMIGOS IN LAKEVIEW

CITYKIDS GRATITUDE SCAVENGER HUNT, HIKE, & PICNIC

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18 AT 10:00 AM | RED MOUNTAIN PARK

Families are invited to join us for a hike through Red Mountain. Pack a picnic and we'll eat together after exploring the Sensory Trail and adventuring on a scavenger hunt. Strollers and pets are invited.

CITYKIDS SINGING IN ADVENT

Kids will sing in the Sanctuary on Sunday, December 10. Our kids have already begun practicing during Sunday School each week. If you'd like your kids to participate in our program, please be sure to attend Sunday School so they can practice! We will have focused practices on November 5, 12, and 26 for all ages and will try on costumes and practice lines. Please drop your kids off by 9:45am (nursery will be walked up).

YOUTH UPDATES

YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL

9:45AM ON SUNDAYS IN THE YOUTH ROOM

DURING THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER WE WILL LOOK AT WHAT IT MEANS TO BE GENEROUS IN A SERIES CALLED "OVER THE TOP."

NOVEMBER YOUTH EVENT

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 3:00PM – 7:00PM

YOUTH ARE INVITED TO SPEND AN AFTERNOON AT THE YOUTH MINISTER'S HOUSE WHERE THERE WILL BE GAMES, FELLOWSHIP, AND FOOD! STUDENTS WILL BE PICKED UP IN THE CHURCH PARKING LOT AT 3:00PM AND DROPPED BACK OFF AT 7:00PM FOR PICKUP.

CLICK [HERE](#) TO SIGN UP FOR THIS FREE EVENT!

AS WE SEEK TO BE AN OPEN PLACE FOR ALL

MY PRAYER FOR FIRST CHURCH IS:

*Is to be a place that will be open to all the world and that
I will be able to grow closer to God.*

- Tim Burch

*That we continue to live into our priorities.
That we grow in discipleship, developing a deep and abiding faith that is both
resilient and active, moving us to engage with the world differently.
That First Church will continue to welcome those who have been hurt/reject-
ed by other churches, offering love, space, and grace to heal and belong.*

- Kristie Burch



GIFTS RECEIVED BY THE CHURCH

TO THE MEMORIAL FUND

IN MEMORY OF MARIAN NAFF GWIN
from Renee Driskel

IN MEMORY OF PAMELA SUE HAYES
from Andrea Hayes

IN MEMORY OF ROSE RAPACH
from Stephan Bisaha

TO THE MUSIC FUND

IN MEMORY OF MARGARET SCHOCK
from Lyn Grant

TO THE BUILDING FUND

IN MEMORY OF RANDY HANCOCK
from Lyn Grant



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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