

MAY 2024

CONNECTIONS

GENERAL CONFERENCE

DOES NOT
DEFINE US

LOVE

DOES



COMBINED WORSHIP

SUNDAY, MAY 5 IN THE SANCTUARY

On Sunday, May 5 following the completion of General Conference we will worship together in the Sanctuary for a joint service led by both our Loft and Sanctuary worship teams. We encourage you to wear your God Is Love t-shirt. Whether we are experiencing celebration for progress moving forward or mourning the continued struggle, we will be together remembering that General Conference does **NOT** define First Church...Love does!



PICNIC
First Church

SUNDAY, MAY 5

FOLLOWING WORSHIP

JOIN YOUR CHURCH FAMILY for a beautiful picnic lunch in the park on **Sunday, May 5!** We'll head to Railroad Park right after worship and enjoy the sunshine together. We invite you to wear your God Is Love t-shirt, bring your own lunch, a chair, and a blanket to sit on. You're also invited to bring any outdoor games to play with friends like frisbees, cornhole, or kites. Let's welcome summer in Birmingham the best way we know how!

FAITH like a Child

MAY SERMON SERIES

In multiple places throughout the Gospels, Jesus encourages his followers to have faith like a child. One of the ways we can embrace and explore our inner child is by listening to and learning from children's picture books. These stories open us up to understanding our faith in new and meaningful ways, often transporting us outside of the usual texts and enriching the words with beautiful illustrations. We hope you will join us in this series as we consider the lessons of some more recent children's books and the themes they draw out for us. In this series we will tackle topics like being true to yourself, the power of words and creativity, as well as loss, hope, and the power of music.

5.12 | WHERE OLIVER FITS by Cale Atkinson

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-27 OR ROMANS 12:4-8, PSALM 139:13-16

5.19 | WORD COLLECTOR by Peter H. Reynolds

ACTS 2:1-21, PSALM 104:24-34, 35B

5.26 | THE DAM by David Almond and Levi Pinfold

ECCLESIASTES 3:1-8, PSALM 23, JAMES 4:13-17

SENIOR SUNDAY

CONGRATULATIONS SENIORS! Before the school year comes to a close, we want to recognize our seniors and their families in worship in the Loft or Sanctuary on Sunday, May 12. We want to pray for you and celebrate all that is still ahead of you as you prepare for this next phase of life. If you are a senior and want to be included, please email Ashley with a Senior Photo at Ashley@firstchurchbhm.com. We hope you will make an effort to join us for this special Sunday.

Joining SUNDAY MAY 12

ON SUNDAY, MAY 12 we will host our next Joining Sunday in both the Loft and Sanctuary worship spaces. This is an opportunity to join the church alongside a group of people so that no one has to worry about standing up in front of the congregation alone. If you've been visiting with us at First Church and are interested in learning more about becoming a member (and have not yet attended a First Church 101), reach out to one of our pastors to see about meeting for lunch or coffee to talk more. If you are ready to join (and we hope you are!), please reach out to Katie Gilbert at Katie@firstchurchbhm.com.



COMBINED WORSHIP

SUNDAY, MAY 26 | IN THE LOFT

You are invited to combined worship in the Loft on Sunday, May 26 as we come together as a faith community over Memorial Day weekend. Together we will wrap up our sermon series, Faith Like a Child using the book **THE DAM** by David Almond and Levi Pinfold. We will explore themes of remembering, honoring, and loss. You are invited to arrive in early in the Loft lounge area to enjoy the wonderful hospitality of our Coffee Team and partake in coffee, hot tea, and delicious snacks. We hope to see you on Memorial Day weekend in the Loft at 11:00am.

NORTH ALABAMA CONFERENCE DAY AT THE MUSEUM

SATURDAY, MAY 18

The Advocacy for Social Justice Team is hosting a "North Alabama Conference Day at the Museum" at the Legacy Museum and National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, Alabama, on Saturday, May 18, 2024. First Church regularly encourages folks to visit and learn from this important experience. In addition, the museum has recently opened a new exhibit on the water that none of our former trips would have included. The cost to enter the Museum is \$5. As a part of our conference's and church's initiative to dismantle racism, it is vital that we understand the history of racism and learn from our past so that we may lean into a healthier future. Click **HERE** to read more and register now.

PRIDE

AT FIRST CHURCH

One of our most highly anticipated weekends every summer is Pride weekend in Birmingham. Every year, we participate in the Central Alabama Pride Parade and Pride Fest as a church family and it is always so much fun. Mark your calendars for Saturday, June 8 and Sunday, June 9 to join us as we celebrate Pride and spread God's love to the city of Birmingham! If you want to volunteer with First Church's booth at Pride Fest click [HERE](#) to select a time and sign up. For any questions, please email Katherine@firstchurchbhm.com.



GET YOUR

PRIDE

SWAG

Need some fresh "God is Love" swag for Pride? Order from our Redbubble shop [HERE](#) to order anything your heart desires! Don't forget to leave enough time for your order to be shipped out and arrive before early June.

THE POWER OF Plant-Based LIVING

A SUMMER SMALL GROUP

You're invited to join us every other Thursday evening from June 6 through August 8 as we explore the ways in which plant-based living can benefit our health, world, and environment. The hope of this group is to inspire the act of looking at all facets of plant-based eating – the ethical, humanitarian, nutritional, and environmental implications – and to equip members with tools to modify their lifestyle however they see fit. This group is open and welcome to anyone - from devoted plant-based individuals to those who are simply curious. You'll hear from experts on different topics such as ethical farming, nutrition, carbon emissions, and more. Sign-ups are highly encouraged for this group as we will need a head count for meals each meeting (all meals will be plant-based).

You can register [HERE](#) or email Katherine@firstchurchbhm.com for any questions.

FIRST CHURCH Community: groups

Community Groups provide a sense of fellowship and encourage deeper connection within our congregation. These groups - Dinner Groups and Life 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](#).

CITY KIDS ARTS CAMP 2024



HERO HOTLINE

CALLED TOGETHER TO SERVE GOD

ARTS CAMP IS BACK!

JULY 15 - 18 | 9:00AM - 1:00PM

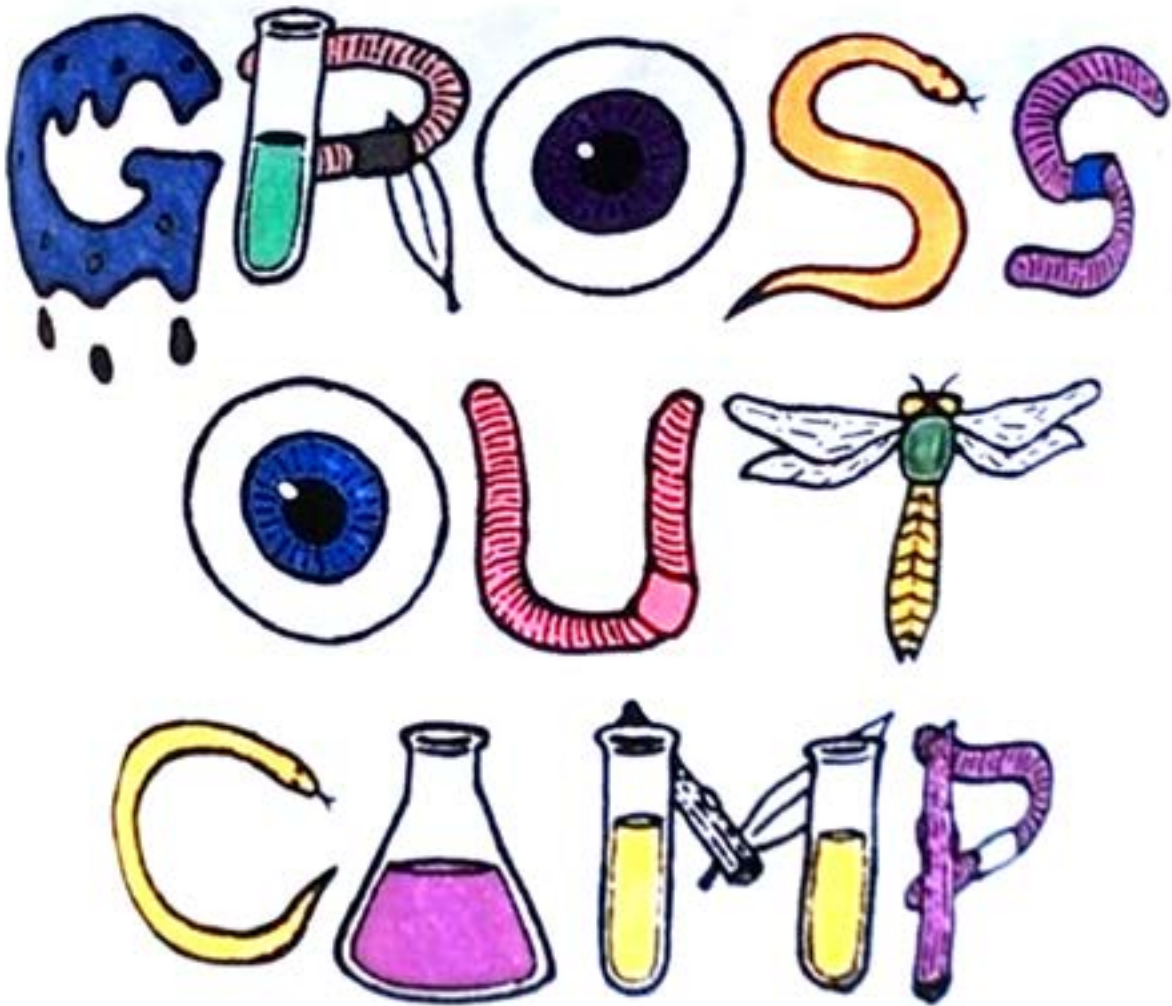
During Arts Camp students will explore how they can be HEROES in their everyday lives. We will learn through crafts, science, song, dance, recreation, and more.

OUR HEROES WILL DIVE INTO THE FOLLOWING THEMES:

- **HEROES are Called to Follow Jesus.**
- **HEROES are Called to Help Others.**
- **HEROES are to Work Together.**
- **HEROES are called to show Grace!**

We are excited to offer Arts Camp at a rate of \$40 per camper which includes lunch and a morning snack. An extended Care option will be available for \$35 per camper and will run until 4:00pm each day. An afternoon snack will be provided.

Click [HERE](#) to register now!



JUNE 10 - JUNE 13 | 9:00AM - 4:00PM EACH DAY

We are once again 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!) and will focus on exploring God's creation in the woods, creeks, and fields. Fresh Air Family's Director and Lead Instructor will be helping to lead our camp.

COST WILL BE \$125 PER 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 SIGN UP NOW.

CITY KIDS UPDATES

FAMILY DAY AT THE ZOO **SATURDAY, MAY 4 | 9:00AM – 12:00PM**

Gather your loved ones of all ages for a wild adventure amidst nature's wonders. From majestic lions to playful primates, there's something for everyone to marvel at! Parents simply pay for the ticket upon arrival at the zoo. Don't miss out on this fantastic opportunity to bond with other families from First Church while exploring the beauty of God's creation. See you there!

SERVE DAY **WITH URBAN MINISTRY** **SATURDAY, JUNE 1 | 9:00AM – 12:30PM**

All 3rd through 12th grade students are invited to join us for a day of service at Urban Ministry, Inc. Click [**HERE**](#) to register now.

POOL PARTY **FRIDAY, JUNE 14 | 6:15PM – 8:15PM**

Everyone is invited to join us at West Homewood Pool, as we celebrate the summer! No registration is required, just bring your swimming gear and join us for some fun.

YOUTH MINISTRY

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

SIX FLAGS

THURSDAY, MAY 30, | 8:00AM – 8:00PM

STUDENTS WILL NEED TO BE DROPPED OFF AT THE CHURCH AT 8:00AM SO THAT WE CAN HEAD TO SIX FLAGS FOR A DAY OF FUN. WE WILL RETURN FOR PICK UP AT THE CHURCH AT 8:00PM. THE COST IS \$55 FOR THE DAY. CLICK [HERE](#) TO REGISTER.

SERVE DAY

WITH URBAN MINISTRY

SATURDAY, JUNE 1 | 9:00AM – 12:30PM

ALL 3RD THROUGH 12TH GRADE STUDENTS ARE INVITED TO JOIN US FOR A DAY OF SERVICE AT URBAN MINISTRY, INC. CLICK [HERE](#) TO REGISTER NOW.

POOL PARTY

AT THE WEST HOMEWOOD POOL

FRIDAY, JUNE 14 | 6:15PM – 8:15PM

EVERYONE IS INVITED TO JOIN US AT THE POOL AS WE CELEBRATE THE SUMMER! NO REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED, JUST BRING YOU SWIMMING GEAR AND JOIN US FOR SOME FUN.

PASSPORT SUMMER STUDENT CAMP

SUNDAY, JUNE 23 – FRIDAY, JUNE 28

6TH THROUGH 12TH GRADERS ARE INVITED TO JOIN US FOR A WEEK OF LEARNING AND COMMUNITY WITH PASSPORT CAMPS AT CONVERSE UNIVERSITY IN SPARTANBURG, SOUTH CAROLINE. THE COST IS \$400 FOR THE WEEK. CLICK [HERE](#) TO REGISTER NOW.

OCTOBER 7-11, 2024 AT CAMP SUMATANGA

WELCOMING THE WILDERNESS

A 4-DAY ACADEMY FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION

The Academy of Spiritual Formation invites you to “Welcoming the Wilderness,” a 4-Day Academy that will explore the wilderness as metaphor in scripture as well as a literal reality, and explore spiritual practices to guide us along the way. Anyone who desires to deepen their relationship with God through an intentional balanced daily rhythm of prayer, worship, study, and reflection is invited to attend. The 4-day Academy will be led by Rev. Dr. Larry Peacock, a United Methodist pastor, retreat leader, and spiritual director, as well as Dr. Noel Forlini Burt, author and instructor at Samford University. Click [HERE](#) to learn more and register. First Church member Hanna Schock is serving on the leadership team for this event. If you have any questions, you can reach out to Hanna by email at hanna-schock@bellsouth.net or by phone at 205-910-7931

PRAYER TEAM INVITATION

In Philippians 4:6-7 we are given powerful words about prayer, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God.” At First Church, we believe in the supporting love of prayer. One of the commitments we make to one another is that we will pray for our church family. If you would like to support your church family through the ministry of prayer, you are invited to sign up for the weekly prayer team email. You can do so by emailing Jonathan Goss at Jonathan@firstchurchbhm.com.

JUSTICE & MERCY

JUSTICE AND MERCY IS CENTRAL TO WHO WE ARE AT FIRST CHURCH. RECENTLY WE RESTRUCTURED TO TAKE A MORE COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO THIS ASPECT OF OUR IDENTITY. EACH OF OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS NOW HAS BOTH A STAFF AND LAY LIAISON TO HELP EDUCATE AND ENGAGE IN THEIR WORK. WE INVITE YOU TO CLICK [HERE](#) TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR PARTNERS AND LIAISONS.

FIRST CHURCH ONLINE DIRECTORY

Did you know that our online database offers us an online directory? Everyone who is a regular part of the First Church family has access to this online directory. You can find it at any time by visiting our website, clicking on the “Resources” tab and scrolling down to the tab labeled “directory.” You will need a username and password to enter the database. If you do not have this information (or cannot remember it from before), please reach out to Katie Gilbert at Katie@firstchurchbhm.com.

AS WE SEEK TO BE AN OPEN PLACE FOR ALL

MY PRAYER FOR FIRST CHURCH IS:

**More of my friends and Samford students will get curious about
First Church and fall in love just like I have.**

- Bradley Seals

That we continue to welcome ALL who seek a spiritual home.

- Chris Minnix and Jay Jessee

For First Church to continue to welcome all and love and serve it's community.

- Jessica Armstrong

Continued grace and presence to open the hearts and minds of all of our community.

- Matt Meloun

**That the church will continue to be courageous in challenging
people to grow in their faith and support them as they do so.**

- Jenny Tinsley

**To continue to be a warm, loving, and friendly church
and to continue to be a church for all.**

- Marvionne McCampbell

**That First Church will always have the love, faith, resources,
and energy to be a light to ALL people in our region.**

- Jude and Rob Rodwell

**Continued bravery and community presence as First Church works to change
the way people understand grace and acceptance. I pray that people who
never expected to enter another church find First Church.**

- Caleb Clark





UPDATE YOUR **CONTACT INFORMATION**

We know a lot has changed over the last year - many of you have moved, changed jobs, phone numbers, email addresses, etc. 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

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 Community Engagement: Katherine Mullen Katherine@firstchurchbhm.com
Minister of Families & Youth: 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
Nursery Coordinator: Julie Caine..... Julie@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