

CONNECTIONS

OCTOBER 2025

A photograph of two young women in graduation gowns. The woman on the left is dressed as a witch, wearing a tall, pointed black hat and a black gown. The woman on the right is wearing a black gown with a maroon lining and a maroon and gold striped tie, and is holding a wooden wand. Both women are smiling. The background shows a blurred outdoor setting with trees and buildings.

Welcoming
FALL

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26 AT 4:00PM

FALL FESTIVE-ALL

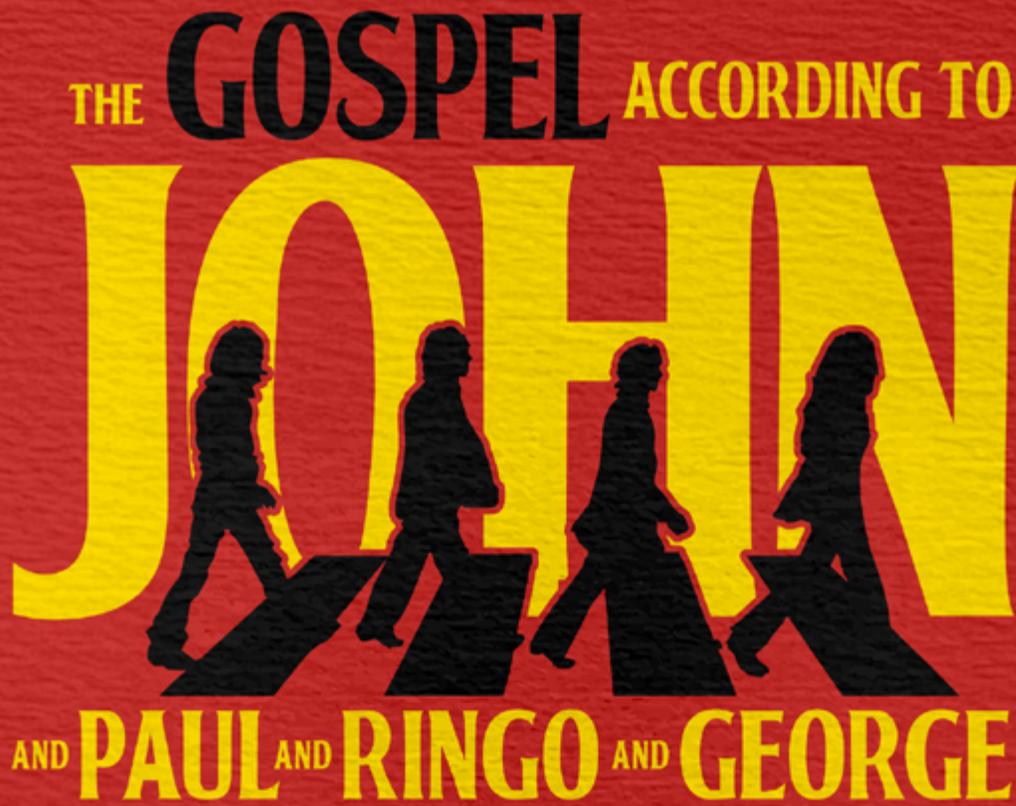
COME ONE, COME ALL, TO THE FALL FESTIVE-ALL!

Join us for an evening of fun, games, contests, and more on Sunday, October 26 from 4:00pm to 5:30pm in our back parking lot. We'll have hot dogs, live music, Trailer Park Photos, inflatables, games, a balloon artist, the beloved cake walk and more! Plus, the Magic City Tappers are giving a special performance to kick us off and you won't want to miss.

This year we are inviting Sunday School classes and small groups to dress up in costume together to enter our Group Costume Contest. The winning group will receive a coveted trophy and - most importantly - bragging rights for the year.

If you have any questions or would like to volunteer for the Fall Festival, please email Katherine at Katherine@firstchurchbhm.com.

THE **GOSPEL** ACCORDING TO
JOHN
AND **PAUL** AND **RINGO** AND **GEORGE**



The Beatles took the world by storm in the sixties and their popularity has continued ever since. At First Church, we regularly encourage the blurring of lines between what is considered secular and what is considered sacred in our world. The music of the Beatles is one such example as their songs are filled with reflections on universal themes like love, grace, hope, forgiveness, sorrow, peace, and so much more. In this series we will use the iconic music of the Beatles to guide our conversations and reflections on lessons from Scripture.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5
ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE
1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-27, 1 JOHN 4:7-12
WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19
LADY MADONNA
DEUTERONOMY 32:11-12, 18, PROVERBS 31:10-31

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12
BLACKBIRD
JEREMIAH 29:1, 4-7, LUKE 17:11-19

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26
LET IT BE
MATTHEW 6:25-34, LUKE 1:26-38

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5

WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY

ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5 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 that we are one and not divided. We share our resources for life and celebrate our connection as we seek to love one another.

THANK YOU

In September our stewardship campaign came to a culmination as the First Church family turned in our 2026 pledge cards. Our pledges are more than a symbol – they are the evidence of our money stories as individuals and as a community. They represent our collective desire to reimagine a world where everyone has enough and to find ways to grow our generosity in all that we say and do. Thank you for choosing to give generously as we continue to expand the love of First Church both within its walls and out into our community. If you have not yet made your pledge for 2026 click [**HERE**](#) to do so now.



Wednesday Night **DINNER & PROGRAMMING**

We are enjoying the community and fellowship we experience on Wednesday nights this fall. As a reminder, dinner begins at 5:15pm with adult programming to follow at 6:15pm. The nursery opens at 5:30pm and children's and youth programming will begin at 6:00pm. You can find the menu and register for dinners [HERE](#).

This fall we begin a new round of small groups and we hope you will find a group that fits your interests. Click [HERE](#) to read detailed information about our offerings this fall and click [HERE](#) to register to participate.



This fall we will offer First Church 101 through a series of Sunday morning sessions during the Sunday School hour. From 9:45am – 10:45am we will gather in the Parlor to learn more about the United Methodist Church and First Church in particular. We are excited about this new opportunity to dive in and learn together. Here is the list of weeks and topics that will be covered:

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 5
United Methodist Theology & Polity

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12
Ways To Get Engaged

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19
First Church Tour

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26
Understanding First Church & Membership

Please click [HERE](#) to let us know you plan to attend.

While registration is not required, it will help us make sure we have enough snacks and coffee.

Joining SUNDAY

ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 2 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 or cannot make the final Sunday in October), 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.

GROUNDS WORK DAY

& PLANT SPONSOR

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18 AT 9:00AM



We need YOU....and your pressure washers, shovels, clippers, blowers, tarps, paint brushes and more! Our grounds need refreshing and this is your opportunity to be a part of the change. On Saturday, October 18 we will gather in Courtyard at 9:00am to remove old plants and shrubbery, clean our sidewalks and walkways, and give our grounds a much needed facelift. If you have a pressure washer you are willing to bring and operate or a pick-up truck, please notify Kathy Draper at kathydraper1011@gmail.com who is helping us to coordinate work on our church grounds.

Even if you are unable to make it on October 18, you have the opportunity to make a lasting impact on our church grounds by purchasing new plants (that were not included in our operating budget for this year) to fill our courtyard. These plants can be purchased as a gift to the church or can even be made in honor or memory of someone you love. Click [HERE](#) to make your donation now.

OCTOBER 3 - 4

EMBODIED

EXPLORING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN BODY & SPIRIT

FOR MUCH OF CHRISTIAN HISTORY, WOMEN HAVE BEEN TAUGHT WHAT IS SACRED AND DIVINE IS LOCATED OUTSIDE OF OUR HUMAN BODIES AND MATERIAL EXISTENCE. WE HAVE BEEN PUSHED THROUGH CYCLES OF SHAME ABOUT HOW WE LOOK, HOW WE MOVE, AND WHO WE ARE. BUT WHAT IF THE OPPOSITE IS TRUE? WHAT IF BEING CONNECTED TO THE DIVINE REQUIRES BEING IN TOUCH WITH OUR BODIES AND EXPERIENCING THE HERE AND NOW IN ITS FULLNESS. OVER THE COURSE OF THE WEEKEND ALL FIRST CHURCH WOMEN AND FEMALE - IDENTIFYING PERSONS WILL BE INVITED TO EXPLORE WHAT IT MEANS TO LIVE AN EMBODIED LIFE THROUGH TEACHING, PRACTICE, AND SMALL GROUP REFLECTION. TOGETHER WE WILL LEAN INTO AND LEARN TO TRUST THE WISDOM OF OUR BODIES. CLICK [HERE](#) TO READ MORE.

FIRST CHURCH Community groups

With a new year comes a relaunch of our Community Groups. This year we are inviting those who are interested to sign up for a specific Dinner Group. Each Dinner Group is located in a different area of Birmingham and led by one of our church members. Groups will be capped at 12 members to encourage deeper connection and consistency. If you are interested in signing up for a Dinner Group, click [HERE](#).

We also offer Life Groups for those who are interested in meeting weekly with a small group of committed members. Life Groups are a great way to find a deeper sense of community here at First Church. If you are interested in joining a life group, please email Katherine@firstchurchbhm.com.

Brews & BROS

LED BY JONATHAN GOSS AT BACK FORTY BREWING COMPANY
(3201 1ST AVE N, BIRMINGHAM, AL 35222)

YOU LEARN
A LOT about SOMEONE
when YOU SHARE A MEAL
TOGETHER.

- ANTHONY BOURDAIN.

Brews & Bros hopes to offer folks from First Church time together around the table to enjoy good food, drinks, and conversation. The hope is to experience deeper connections through a more relaxed atmosphere. We will be meeting the first four Thursdays in October at Back Forty at 6:30pm. Back Forty offers great food as well as both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. Brews & Bros is open to all male-identifying people. If you plan on attending, please feel free to sign up [HERE](#) and select "Brews and Bros".

ALL SAINTS

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 2 AT 11:00 AM
IN THE LOFT AND SANCTUARY SERVICES

We will celebrate All Saints in worship on Sunday, November 2. In both the Loft and Sanctuary 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 by Wednesday, October 22 so that they might be included in this year's celebration of our beloved saints.

2026 CHURCHWIDE RETREAT

RR & REST AND RESIST

Mark your calendars for our 2026 Churchwide Retreat! We will be returning to Camp McDowell Friday, February 13 through Sunday, February 15, 2026.

This year our theme Rest and Resist recognizes the reality of our times – people are anxious, times are tense, and we are inundated with new fears and worries every day. Over the course of this weekend, we will consider stories from Scripture that remind us we have been here before – and we made it through. We will elevate the resilience of God’s people, offer guidance through the valley, and point to the hope and love of God. Click [HERE](#) to read more about our Rest and Resist theme.

In addition to study, we will build connection and friendship through play, singing, and sharing meals together. The cost for the retreat is \$225 for individuals, \$425 for couples, and \$450 for families. Families in need of an extra room can reserve one for an additional \$100.

This year we will begin offering payment plans to those who choose it by selecting the amount you would like to pay and at which frequency (\$100 a month, \$50 a month, etc). All registrations must be paid in full by February 1, 2026. For questions about registration or scholarship opportunities, email Katherine at Katherine@firstchurchbhm.com. A deposit of \$50 is due upon registration. Click [HERE](#) to register today.

CONNECT

FALL RETREAT

(4TH THROUGH 6TH GRADERS)

OCTOBER 17 - OCTOBER 18

Our 4th–6th graders are invited to join us for the Connect Fall Retreat at Camp Sumatanga on Friday, October 17 through Saturday, October 18. This special weekend, hosted in partnership with other UMC churches, gives kids a “taste of camp” with fun activities, new friendships, and meaningful opportunities to grow in faith.

The cost is \$125, which includes lodging, three meals, a t-shirt, and all activities. Scholarships are available—please contact Ashley at ashley@firstchurchbhm.com for details. Click [HERE](#) to sign up for the Connect Fall Retreat!

TOP SECRET SUNDAY

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19

Shhh... this isn't your ordinary Sunday. On October 19, all students in grades 6–12 are invited to stay after church for something we're calling Top Secret Sunday. From 12:00pm to 2:30pm, we'll share lunch together and then launch into a surprise activity so classified we can't even give you a hint.

Parents, no need to worry—we're not leaving campus. But students, get ready for an afternoon packed with mystery, laughter, and memories you'll be talking about long after the mission ends.

So, consider this your official invitation to Top Secret Sunday. Bring your appetite, your curiosity, and your sense of adventure... because the details are on a need-to-know basis.

FIRST CHURCH BIRMINGHAM

JUSTICE & MERCY

OPPORTUNITIES

COMMUNITY ON THE RISE

Join us for Wellness Wednesdays at 11:00 – an opportunity that invites volunteers to bring in a favorite healthy, easy meal to share. Together, we eat, talk about the recipe’s nutritious value, and how we can make it at home ourselves. This opportunity requires buying and cooking a small meal to serve 6-8 people and joining us to eat and share in conversation. To schedule, please email Avery Rhodes at avery@communityontherise.com.

Do you have a favorite boutique store or local shop that might be a perfect fit to sell our recycled jewelry & home decor? Help us by making a pitch to your favorite store. Time commitment includes: a short training/tutorial on our products & pricing; reaching out to sales management at your favorite shop to share about our products; and dropping off a few samples with pricing for shop management to peruse (and picking them up later). To schedule, please email Avery Rhodes at avery@communityontherise.com.

ALABAMA COALITION FOR IMMIGRANT JUSTICE

Volunteers are needed to help refresh Know Your Rights’ (KYR’s) materials in the community and identify and distribute to new locations. These materials are placed in areas such as: schools, restaurants, churches, doctor’s offices, work places, (especially in places that may be frequently visited by Hispanics in the community).

Opportunities are also available to verify reported ICE activity through a Facebook page. If anyone is interested in becoming a verifier they will need to participate in training provided by ACIJ. The Facebook page is ‘Bham Migra Watch’. You will see images of some of the KYR’s materials posted on the page.

In addition, ACIJ launched a mutual aid fundraiser in September that is currently raising money for the families of detainees who are impacted by their family members detention.

For more information about any of these opportunities, contact ACIJ or reach out to our liaison, Sonya Pearson at sonya.pearson@icloud.com

MAGIC CITY ACCEPTANCE PROJECT

Click [HERE](#) to sign up to bring coffee and donuts to their support meeting for families.

WEST END COMMUNITY CHURCH

WE Learn is still in need of adult volunteers for the after school program Monday through Thursday from 3:00pm to 5:30pm. Contact Jay Jessee for details at mjjessee@uab.edu Our next Clean-up Day in West End will be November 15 - Mark your calendars!

URBAN MINISTRIES

First Church is once again providing space for this year's Table of Hope Fundraising dinner on Thursday, October 16. Volunteers are needed to help serve the meal and cleanup after dinner. Contact Jennifer McCombs at jenmccombs40@gmail.com to sign up to volunteer.

WE Build: Grace Works continues their great work at Urban Ministry weekly. Some confidence in renovation and painting is helpful but not required. If you are interested in learning more or joining in this meaningful work, contact Johnny Miller.

BLUE WAGON DONATIONS

Community Furniture Bank is requesting kitchenware, including dinner sets, plates, bowls and coffee mugs. Kitchen utensils and kitchen linens are also welcome. As always, you are invited to leave these donations in the Blue Wagon near the door to the Courtyard in the Education Building.



FIRST CHURCH BIRMINGHAM ANNUAL

CHARGE CONFERENCE

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 9

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 9 our District Superintendent, Mary Henley, 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 hope you will make plans to join us.

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.



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.

FIRST CHURCH BIRMINGHAM **SUNDAY SCHEDULE**

9:45am

SUNDAY SCHOOL

11:00am

LOFT & SANCTUARY IN PERSON WORSHIP

11:00am

LIVE STREAM

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: Kevin Thomas	Kevin@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: Coty Smith.....	Coty@firstchurchbhm.com
Wedding Director: Betsy Pate	Betsy@firstchurchbhm.com
Executive Director of Early Learning Center: Cassandra Copeland	ELC@firstchurchbhm.com
Nursery Coordinator: Natalie Bogart-Pierre	Natalie@firstchurchbhm.com



an OPEN place for ALL to **WORSHIP, GROW,** and **SERVE**

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