



CONNECTIONS

NOVEMBER 2025

GIVING THANKS



WALKING IN THE VALLEY

The 23rd Psalm offers one of the most powerful images in our holy and sacred text – a divine Shepherd who guides us through green pastures and beside still waters. But it also promises a deeper truth – God’s unwavering presence "even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death." Life is not a constant mountaintop experience; it is often a journey through difficult, shadowed valleys. This series *Walking In the Valley* is an honest and compassionate exploration of the valleys we all face: grief, mental illness, addiction, suicide, and loneliness. We will move beyond easy answers and platitudes to discover a God who does not promise to remove the shadows, but promises to walk with us through them, offering comfort, solidarity, and a light that darkness cannot overcome.

11.2 | SHADOWS OF THE VALLEY *GRIEF (ALL SAINTS)*

PSALM 23:1-4, JOHN 11:33-35, HEBREWS 12:1

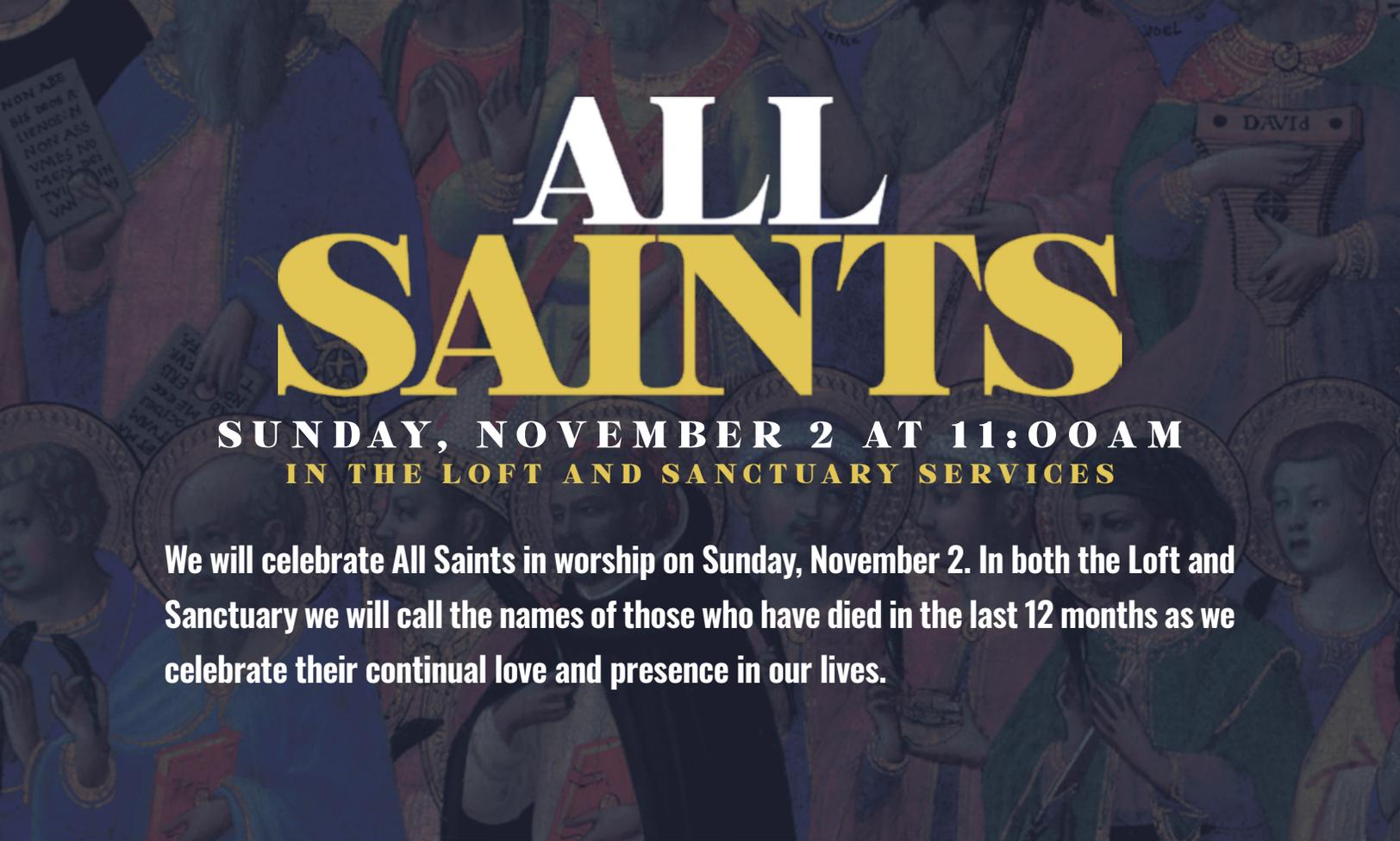
11.9 | YOU NEVER WALK ALONE *LONELINESS & THE PROMISE OF PRESENCE*

PSALM 23:4-6, 1 CORINTHIANS 12:26, MATTHEW 28:20B

11.16 | THE DARK SHADOW *SUICIDE & FINDING HOPE IN DESPAIR*

PSALM 88, ROMANS 8:38-39

11.23 | THE LONG WALK *MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTION*



ALL SAINTS

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 2 AT 11:00AM
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.



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.

Wednesday Night **DINNER & PROGRAMMING**

This fall dinner continues to begin at 5:15pm with adult programming following at 6:15pm. The nursery opens at 5:30pm and children's programming begins at 6:00pm. You can find the menu for the rest of the fall and register for more dinners [HERE](#).

Our last Wednesday Night Dinner with Programming will be on November 19. There will be no Wednesday Night Dinner or Programming on November 26 due to the Thanksgiving holiday.

As we move into another round of small groups, we invite you to find a group that fits your interests. Click [HERE](#) to read more detailed information about our offerings this Fall as well as to register to participate.

CHURCHWIDE ADVENT Event

W E D N E S D A Y , D E C E M B E R 3

The holidays can be a difficult time of year for some members of our First Church family and beyond, so we want to spread some Christmas cheer! Join us for a church-wide caroling event on Wednesday, December 3. We plan to have our regular dinner together at 5:15pm and then split into groups to head out caroling by 6:30pm. We will not plan to return to the church once we are finished caroling. Please reach out to Katherine@firstchurchbhm.com with any questions. Don't forget to sign up for dinner on December 3 by clicking [HERE](#).

PART I SCREENING

WICKED

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16 AT 4:00PM IN THE LOFT

Join us for a special screening of *Wicked: Part One* as we anticipate the release of the sequel! We will plan to meet in the Loft on Sunday, November 16 at 4:00pm. Come dressed in theme - green or pink - and ready to sing-a-long! The movie will begin promptly at 4:00pm, so we encourage you to come early to find a seat and buy a snack. We will be selling concessions to help fundraise for our Panama Learn and Serve team. All ages are welcome and costumes are encouraged! Sign Up [HERE](#) to let us know you're coming.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15 AT 9:00AM

CHURCHWIDE HIKE

AT RED MOUNTAIN PARK

Join us for a churchwide hike (weather permitting) on Saturday, November 15. We'll plan to meet at Red Mountain Park at 9:00am to soak up some beautiful, crisp fall weather together. All ages, hiking levels, and furry (leashed!) friends are welcome. Sign up [HERE](#) to let us know you're coming! Please reach out to Katherine@firstchurchbhm.com with any questions.

2026 CHURCHWIDE RETREAT

RR & REST AND RESIST

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

This retreat will offer us the opportunity to come together as a community and learn more about how we can move through these anxious times together. We will build connection and friendship through study, play, singing, and sharing 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.

We are excited to share that we will begin offering payment plans this year for our retreat. When you sign up, feel free to select the amount that 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, please email Katherine@firstchurchbhm.com. A deposit of \$50 is due upon registration.

CLICK [HERE](#) TO REGISTER TODAY.



ADVENT *Decorations*

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 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.





PROJECT 12.25

Each year Project 12/25 focuses on making the holidays more meaningful for our most vulnerable neighbors. This year, we are excited to share that we will be partnering with The Arc of Central Alabama. in their “Gifts for All” initiative. Every year The Arc works with individuals living in their residential housing, most of whom do not have families of their own, to gift them their wants and needs for the holidays. We will be adopting 30 individuals from The Arc to provide gifts based on wish lists. Click [HERE](#) to sign up to shop for an individual. If you are unable to shop, we invite you to give to Project 12/25 and we will shop on your behalf. Click [HERE](#) to donate.



2025 Advent CALENDAR

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30

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

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3

5:15PM – WEDNESDAY NIGHT DINNER

6:15PM – CHURCH-WIDE CAROLING

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7

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

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14

**11:00AM – THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT – COMBINED IN THE SANCTUARY
(WITH BISHOP JONATHAN HOLSTON)**

4:00PM – BEERS AND CAROLS AT MONDAY NIGHT BREWING

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21

11:00AM – FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT IN THE SANCTUARY & LOFT

6:00PM – LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE IN THE SANCTUARY

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24

4:00PM – CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE IN THE LOFT

6:00PM – CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE IN THE SANCTUARY

CHRISTMAS EVE FLOWERS

This Advent season you have the opportunity to remember or honor a loved one by purchasing a beautiful poinsettia to decorate our altar on Christmas Eve. You are invited to take your flower home with you at the conclusion of worship on Christmas Eve. Poinsettias are available for \$16 each. We will be taking orders until we run out or until the end of the day **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7.**

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

THANK YOU



Thank you for continuing to expand and grow Our Money Story. So far, 162 pledges have been made for a total of \$1,025,925. We are grateful for these gifts but we still have ground to cover to meet our growing budget. If you have not yet made your pledge click the button below.

Click [HERE](#) to make your 2026 pledge.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6 FROM 4:30PM - 8:00PM

PARENT'S *Night Out*

We're excited to host another Parent's Night Out on Saturday, December 6 from 4:30pm - 8:00pm. Children ages 6 months through 5th grade are invited to spend the night enjoying festive activities including Christmas-themed games, a holiday craft, and a Christmas movie. A delicious dinner will also be provided for all participants. The cost is \$25 per child, making this a wonderful and affordable opportunity for parents to enjoy a night out whether that means spending time with friends, going on a date night, or catching up on holiday preparations. Please reach out to Ashley@firstchurchbhm.com if you have any questions. Click [HERE](#) to register now!

PRAYER TEAM I N V I T A T I O N

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.

FIRST CHURCH BIRMINGHAM

JUSTICE & MERCY UPDATES

WEST END COMMUNITY CHURCH & BLACKWARRIOR RIVERKEEPERS

Our final cleanup day for the year will be on Saturday, November 15. We hope you'll make plans to meet us in West End as we look to keep our neighborhoods and watersheds as clean as possible.

BLUE WAGON DONATIONS

During November we will be collecting food items for Glen Iris Grace, a ministry that provides food items that can fit inside backpacks for children to take home over the weekend. Because donations must be non-perishable and produced in a factory without nuts, we invite you to donate items from the list below:

CANNED TUNA OR **CHICKEN**

CANNED SOUP CHICKEN & RICE OR **CHICKEN NOODLE**

KRAFT BOXED MACARONI & CHEESE (NO MICROWAVE)

RAVIOLI (CANNED 15 OZ)

SPAGHETTI OS (CANNED 15 OZ)

KELLOGG'S NUTRIGRAIN BARS (NO NUTS)

QUAKER INSTANT OATMEAL OR **GRITS PACKETS**

GOLDFISH (INDIVIDUALLY WRAPPED)

CHEEZITS (INDIVIDUALLY WRAPPED)

RICE KRISPIES TREATS (INDIVIDUALLY WRAPPED)

In December the Blue Wagon donations will be taking warm hats, scarves and gloves for our unhoused neighbors.

GIFTS RECEIVED BY THE CHURCH

TO THE MEMORIAL FUND

IN MEMORY OF MONTY HOGWOOD

FROM JON CRUMP
FROM GREGORY POWELL
FROM ANA PELLUMBI

IN MEMORY OF JULIUS LINN

FROM TOM AND MARY GENE BOULWARE
FROM BRIAN AND ANGEL GARRETT

IN MEMORY OF NANCY HOLT

FROM BRIAN AND ANGEL GARRETT

IN MEMORY OF EMILY KEITH

FROM BRIAN AND ANGEL GARRETT

TO CHOIR SPECIAL

IN MEMORY OF ROBIN BAKER

FROM LARRY WARD

IN MEMORY OF JULIUS LINN

FROM LARRY WARD
FROM DAVID AND TERRI GLASGOW

IN MEMORY OF FRANK ALFORD

FROM JANE MILLEN

IN HONOR OF BERT PITTS

FROM SUSANNAH FOX

TO THE LIVING CHURCH FUND

IN HONOR OF JOHN PEVERLY

FROM JANE MILLEN

PLANTS PURCHASED FOR OUR COURTYARD

IN HONOR OF FINNLEY LEWIS MILLWOOD

BY AMANDA MILLWOOD

IN HONOR OF ANNE-LAURA COOK

BY ALIE B. GORRIE

IN HONOR OF ALIE B. GORRIE

BY ANNE-LAURA COOK

IN HONOR OF JUDY PERRY

BY SONYA PEARSON

IN HONOR OF MALINDA HAYES

BY LISA MALONE

IN MEMORY OF DAVID PEARSON

BY SONYA PEARSON

IN MEMORY OF MONTY HOGWOOD

BY BRIAN AND ANGEL GARRETT
BY JOHN AND KATHY DRAPER

IN MEMORY OF MARLIN ANDERSON

BY MARLIN AND ANGELA ANDERSON

IN MEMORY OF MARY LIB LOWERY

BY JILL ROGERS



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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