

NOVEMBER 2024

CONNECTIONS



**GIVING
THANKS**

ALL SAINTS

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3 AT 11:00 AM
IN THE LOFT AND SANCTUARY SERVICES

We will celebrate All Saints both virtually and in-person on **Sunday, November 3**. 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.

JUSTICE & MERCY MINISTRY PARTNER FAIR

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3 FOLLOWING WORSHIP IN THE LARGE DINING ROOM

Join us for our Ministry Partner Fair immediately after church on Sunday, November 3 in the Large Dining Room. Each of our partners will be represented by your lay liaison and a representative from the agency. Click [HERE](#) to see a list of our partners. This will be an informal time for you to mill about and further investigate any opportunities that sparked your interest during our educational sessions this summer.

Wintering

NOVEMBER SERMON SERIES

We live in a culture that often wants to remain in the proverbial summer of life - a time where things are happy and warm, where life is faced with ease and fulfillment. However, anyone who has lived a little while in this world knows that this is not how life works. Using Katherine May's book *Wintering: The Power of Rest and Retreat in Difficult Times*, we will explore the truth about the cyclical pattern of life that leaves us returning time and again both to a literal and a figurative winter. Together we will consider the power of rest and retreat, the liminal space of this season, and the opportunities for transformation and wisdom. By looking to Scripture, considering nature, and learning from Katherine May's own journey, we will learn to embrace the gifts of our own winters in new and meaningful ways.

"Wintering is a season in the cold. It is a fallow period in life when you're cut off from the world, feeling rejected, sidelined, blocked from progress, or cast into the role of an outsider. However it arrives, wintering is usually involuntary, lonely, and deeply painful. Yet it's also inevitable. We like to imagine that it's possible for life to be one eternal summer and that we have uniquely failed to achieve that for ourselves... but life's not like that." - from *Wintering: The Power of Rest and Retreat in Difficult Times* - Katherine May

11.10.24 | Rest & Retreat
ECCLESIASTES 3: 1-8, MARK 6:30-32

11.17.24 | Liminal Space
GENESIS 39:21-23, DEUTERONOMY 8:1-9

11.24.24 | Transformation
LUKE 5:1-11, ROMANS 12:1-2



FIRST CHURCH BIRMINGHAM ANNUAL

CHARGE CONFERENCE

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17

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 17 our District Superintendent, Rev. Dr. 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 attend.



Wednesday Night DINNER & PROGRAMMING

We are continuing Wednesday Night Dinners through December 4. We will not meet for dinner or programming on Wednesday, November 27 as we break for Thanksgiving. 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 programming begins at 6:00pm. You can find the menu for the rest of the fall and register for dinners [HERE](#).

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.



Many of us are familiar with the Apostle's Creed but have you ever wondered about the theological meaning behind the words? Have you ever questioned whether the words reflect your beliefs or if you are just reciting an old formula? On **FEBRUARY 14 - 16**, we will tackle these difficult questions and more at our church-wide retreat.

In addition to studying and learning together, our churchwide retreat will offer the opportunity for us to build connection through rest, play, meditation, singing, and sharing. There will be nursery care provided along with CityKids and youth programming. Click [HERE](#) to read more about this year's theme as well as details about pricing and registration.

CLICK [HERE](#) TO REGISTER TODAY.

PANAMA

LEARN AND SERVE

EXPERIENCE

JUNE 28 - JULY 6

First Church is planning on going back to Panama in 2025. We are thrilled to have this opportunity. We are starting now to build a team for our Panama Learn and Serve week in July of 2025. Panama is a beautiful country with even more beauty found in her people. First Church has been deeply connected to Panama and the people there for almost 15 years. Our connection is through a United Methodist missionary, Rhett Thompson, who has served in Panama for over 30 years. Rhett has connected us to folks in Panama that we know by name now. It is through these connections that many folks here at First Church have had life-changing experiences in Panama. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

Click [HERE](#) to register to join our team now.



2024 Advent CALENDAR

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1

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

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4

5:15PM - WEDNESDAY NIGHT DINNER

6:15PM - CHURCH-WIDE ADVENT EVENT

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8

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

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15

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

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

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19

6:00PM - LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE IN THE SANCTUARY

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22

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

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24

4:00PM - CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE IN THE LOFT

6:00PM - CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE IN THE SANCTUARY



CHURCHWIDE ADVENT Event

W E D N E S D A Y , D E C E M B E R 4

All ages are invited to a church-wide Advent wreath-making and crafty Christmas party during our regular Wednesday Night Dinner and Programming time on Wednesday, December 4. What's better than a night of Christmas crafts with friends?! Following dinner, we'll be guided in creating an Advent wreath which can be taken home to use for the season. We'll also decorate ornaments and cookies to further the jolly joy! Adults are invited to register [HERE](#) for the event - there is a \$30 fee (per family) that covers the wreath and craft supplies. Please note that dinner reservations will still be made through our regular weekly link [HERE](#). We hope you will make plans to attend!



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 come alongside two of our partner ministries as they provide resources to our wider community.

Read more below about the specific ways you can participate in Project 12/25 this year. In addition, you are also welcome to make a financial contribution which will be used to help our partner agencies in their work during this Christmas season. Your gift can be made through the link below or by selecting "Project 12/25" in the dropdown menu online.

CHURCH OF THE RECONCILER

This year you have the option to share funds with Church of the Reconciler to hand out bus passes to those in need of assistance with transportation. The cost for a bus pass for one week is \$32. Click [HERE](#) to make your gift now.

GREATER BIRMINGHAM MINISTRIES

You will also have the option to partner with Greater Birmingham Ministries as they seek to make a memorable Christmas for families in our area. To purchase a gift for GBM's Christmas store we invite you to:

PULL A TAG OFF the Christmas Tree in the Welcome Center
or click [HERE](#) to see a list of suggested items.

PURCHASE A GIFT from the list's suggestions to be included in GBM's distribution.

BRING YOUR GIFTS unwrapped to the church on or before Sunday, December 8.

THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!



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 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 \$24 each. We will be taking orders until we run out or until the end of the day Sunday, December 8.

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



PLEDGE UPDATE

Thank you for Digging Deeper as we grow and extend our roots of generosity. So far, **181** pledges have been made for a total of **\$966,563**. 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.

MAKE YOUR 2025 PLEDGE

Thanksgiving **PIE** **FUNDRAISER** for **The Early Learning Center**

THE EARLY LEARNING CENTER is hosting a pie fundraiser to raise money to purchase a new bus. Pies are \$30 each and will be handmade by Ms. Sylvia who regularly cooks out of the First Church kitchen. All orders must be placed by November 15 and picked up from the Small Dining Room on either Monday, November 25 (4:00pm - 6:00pm) or Tuesday, November 26 (4:00pm -

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THE OPTIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

**APPLE PIE • CHOCOLATE CHESS PIE • PUMPKIN PIE
PECAN PIE • SWEET POTATO PIE**

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To order your pie(s), please email elc@firstchurchbhm.com with your name and the type and number of pie(s) you would like to order. Payment can be made by cash or check (please make it out to the ELC directly and list "pie" in the memo line) and placed in the offering on Sundays.

HELP SERVE A MEAL AT CHURCH OF THE RECONCILER

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1, 9:00AM

On Sunday, December 1 a group from First Church will join Church of the Reconciler for worship and then serve their afternoon meal. The morning will begin at 9:00am as the group will deliver the food first, then transition to worship at 9:30am, and serve lunch at 11:00am. We will be collecting donations to help offset the cost of the meal as well as collecting the names of individuals who want to participate in serving the meal that Sunday morning. If you have questions, please reach out to Kim Boyd at kdrboyd@bellsouth.net.

Click [HERE](#) to register or make your donation now.



TABLE OF HOPE

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 6:00PM – 9:00PM

First Church will host Urban Ministry's annual Table of Hope fundraiser on Thursday, November 7 in the Large Dining Room from 6:00pm – 9:00pm. The cost per seat is \$100 or \$800 for a table of eight. You are invited to join the work of Urban Ministry as they work to spread love, hope, and opportunity in Birmingham's West End community. Visit WWW.URBANMINISTRY.ORG for more information and to purchase your tickets.

CITY KIDS UPDATES

THANKSGIVING PARTY

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20 FROM 6:00PM – 7:15PM
IN THE EDUCATION BUILDING**

Join us for a Thanksgiving celebration filled with delicious desserts, fun games, and creative crafts! It's a wonderful opportunity to gather, give thanks, and enjoy a festive evening together.

GLOW WILD AT BIRMINGHAM ZOO

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7

We'll meet at the zoo to marvel at the beautiful holiday lights. This family outing promises fun for everyone, so don't miss out on this enchanting adventure!

PARENTS NIGHT OUT

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14 FROM 4:00PM – 9:00PM AT FIRST CHURCH

COST IS \$25 PER CHILD, REGISTER [HERE](#)

While you take a well-deserved break, your little ones will be engaged in a safe and exciting environment to enjoy dinner, crafts, entertainment, and a movie.

YOUTH UPDATES

DINNER AND A MOVIE

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23 AT 4:00PM AT THE VESTAVIA AMC

COST IS \$12, REGISTER [HERE](#)

GET READY FOR AN EXCITING EVENING WITH FRIENDS ON NOVEMBER 23 AT VESTAVIA AMC! WE'LL KICK OFF THE NIGHT WITH A DELICIOUS DINNER AT TACO MAMA THEN STROLL OVER TO ENJOY THE HEARTWARMING HOLIDAY CLASSIC, *THE BEST CHRISTMAS PAGEANT EVER*.

HOLIDAY IN THE PARK AT SIX FLAGS

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21, MEET IN CHURCH PARKING LOT AT 10:00AM

COST IS \$50, REGISTER [HERE](#)

GET READY FOR AN UNFORGETTABLE DAY OF HOLIDAY MAGIC. ENJOY THRILLING RIDES, FESTIVE LIGHTS, AND SEASONAL FESTIVITIES AT SIX FLAGS. BRING YOUR FRIENDS ALONG FOR A DAY FILLED WITH FUN AND LAUGHTER!

CONFIRMATION RETREAT

APRIL 4-6 AT CAMP CHANDLER

COST IS \$125, REGISTER [HERE](#)

THIS RETREAT IS OPEN TO ALL YOUTH, EVEN IF YOU HAVE ALREADY BEEN THROUGH CONFIRMATION. IT'S A FANTASTIC OPPORTUNITY TO GROW IN FAITH, MAKE NEW FRIENDS, AND DEEPEN YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF OUR COMMUNITY.

GIFTS RECEIVED BY THE CHURCH

TO THE MEMORIAL FUND

IN MEMORY OF CHRYSLER FISHER

FROM JOHN AND BETTY MCMAHON

FROM LYN GRANT

IN MEMORY OF EMILY KEITH

FROM JOHN AND BETTY MCMAHON

FROM LYN GRANT

IN MEMORY OF LARRY VINES

FROM SUSAN VINES

IN MEMORY OF DR. JOHN MCCREADIE

FROM SOPHIE GRIFFIES

TO THE LIVING CHURCH FUND

IN HONOR OF LARRY AND CAROL YORK

FROM SHERYL THORNTON

IN HONOR OF CAROL YORK

FROM THE SUSANNAH WESLEY CIRCLE IN PRATTVILLE

TO THE CHOIR FUND

IN HONOR OF JENNIFER WATERS

FROM LARRY AND JULIE CAINE

IN MEMORY OF EMILY KEITH

FROM BETTY GUNN

FROM DAVID AND TERRI GLASGOW



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.

FIRST CHURCH BIRMINGHAM **SUNDAY SCHEDULE**

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: Andrea Hayes Andrea@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