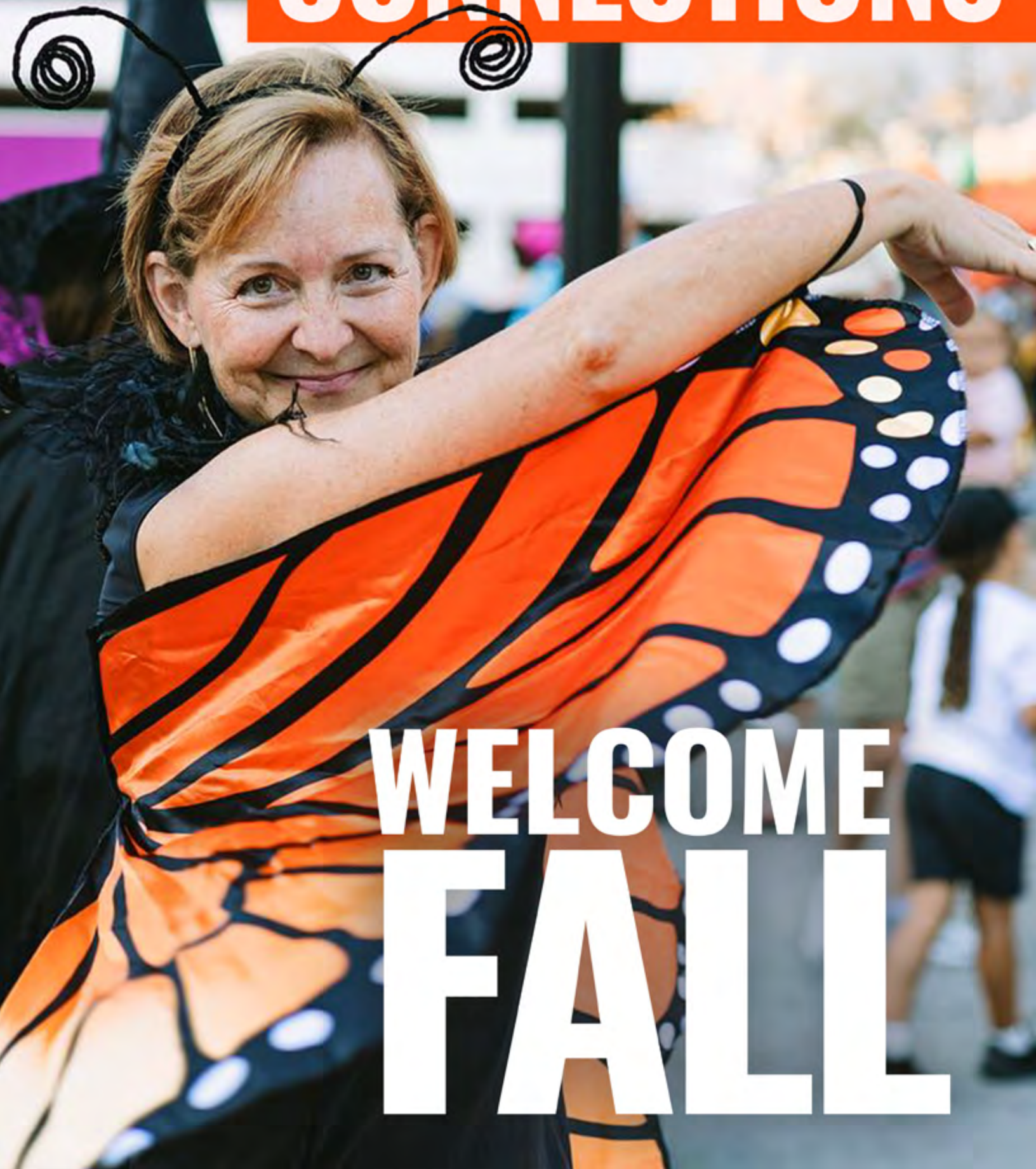


OCTOBER 2024

CONNECTIONS



WELCOME FALL

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27 AT 4:00PM

FALL FESTIVE-ALL HEROES & VILLAINS

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

Our annual fall festival is returning on Sunday, October 27 at 4:00pm in our back parking lot. This year, we've chosen the theme "Heroes and Villains" to help inspire your creativity and costumes. From Superman to Cruella, from Rey to Voldemort, there is bound to be a costume idea for everyone!

We'll have games, hot dogs, bounce houses for kids, a costume contest, pie contest, a cake walk, and so much more. Plus, you'll get a chance to challenge yourself on our inflatable "mechanical bull" ride. All fundraising proceeds will go towards our friends at the Jefferson County Memorial Project. You can purchase tickets with cash or card at the event to participate in our fundraising activities which includes the cake walk (donations are also welcome).

Every year Sunday School classes, small groups, Dinner Groups, etc. register to host a booth at the fall festival. This can range from a themed booth with candy or snacks, a booth with crafts, or even a booth with interactive games and prizes. We encourage you to create a booth around our theme "Heroes and Villains." Each host group is responsible for the decorations and items for their booths. Click [HERE](#) to register your booth and sign up for the pie contest.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6 IN THE LOFT & SANCTUARY AT 11:00AM

WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY

On Sunday, October 6 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.



PLEDGE THANK YOU

In September our stewardship campaign came to a culmination as the First Church family turned in our 2025 pledge cards. Our pledges are more than a symbol – they are the evidence of our digging deeper as individuals and our collective desire to grow our giving so that the fruits of our generosity might grow as well. Thank you for choosing to give generously as we seek to strengthen the roots, the trunk, branches, and fruit of our tree so that we might 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 2025 click [HERE](#) now.



10.13 | **COMPASSION**
The Polarization Within
Isaiah 11:6-9

10.20 | **HUMILITY**
Listen More, Speak Less
Ephesians 4:1-6

10.27 | **RESPECT**
Living Together on Uncommon Ground
1 Corinthians 12:1-26

11.3 | **LOVE**
Malice Toward None
v

Our world seems to be consumed with division—often typified in the colors red and blue. Rather than stay in our monochromatic silos, the Golden Rule in scripture challenges us to engage in conversation and seek to create whatever common good we can with our relatives, friends, and neighbors who we might consider to be on the “other side” politically and ideologically. As we attempt to come together, the idea is not that we are obliterating either one or trying to change each other, but rather we discover the beauty that can be created when we work together to make the world a better place. The “purple space” is where we cultivate kindness, compassion, humility, respect, and love for one another and for the good of all the world, no matter what.



COMBINED WORSHIP

OCTOBER SCHEDULE

10.6.24 | World Communion – Loft and Sanctuary at 11:00am

10.13.24 | Combined Service in the Loft at 11:00am

10.20.24 | Combined Service in the Sanctuary at 11:00am

10.27.24 | Loft and Sanctuary at 11:00am

Wednesday Night **DINNER & PROGRAMMING**

WEDNESDAY NIGHT DINNERS ARE BACK! This fall dinner will begin at 5:15pm with adult programming to follow at 6:15pm. The nursery will open at 5:30pm and children's programming will begin at 6:00pm. You can find the menu for the rest of the fall and register for dinners [HERE](#).

In addition, October will launch a new round of small groups. Click [HERE](#) to read more detailed information about our offerings for the entire fall semester as well as to register to participate. We invite you to find a group that fits your interests and make plans to come and join us this fall.

Brews & BROS

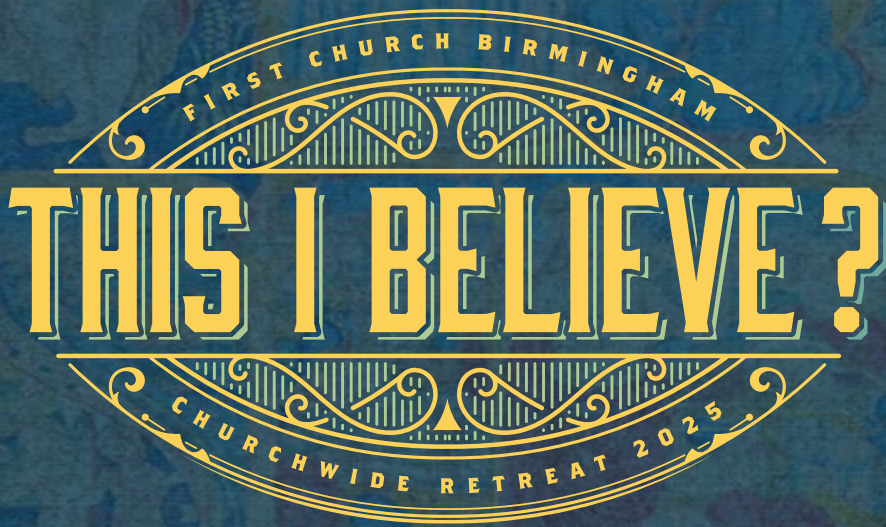
"FELLA-SHIP" GROUP

LED BY REV. JONATHAN GOSS

THURSDAY EVENINGS IN OCTOBER AT 6:00PM

AT BACK FORTY BEER COMPANY (3201 1ST AVE N)

We live in a culture that promotes a form of masculinity that is seen as tough, powerful, and emotionless. At First Church, we believe strength is shown by those that are willing to be vulnerable, share their feelings, and participate in a community that supports one another. In the small group Brews & Bros, we will create an intentional space for those male-identifying persons to share with one another and explore how God is calling us to redefine masculinity in today's world. Our discussion topics will range from how you grew up to your understanding of femininity and masculinity. The idea is to gradually ease into heavier conversations as we get to know one another while sharing a drink together around a table at a local brewery. At Back Forty, they serve good food and both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks. Click [HERE](#) to sign up now.



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.

ALL SAINTS

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3 AT 11:00AM
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. 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 23 so that they might be included in this year's celebration of our beloved saints.



AWAKENING

Women's Retreat

You are invited to join us for First Church's women's retreat "Awakening" - a transformative journey into the heart of feminine spirituality and empowerment, guided by Sue Monk Kidd's book *The Dance of the Dissident Daughter*. Over the course of our time together you will be invited to reclaim your voice, embrace your authentic self, and explore the depths of spiritual awakening. The retreat will be held Friday, November 1 from 5:30pm to 9:30pm and Saturday, November 2 from 8:00am to 5:00pm at First Church. The cost of the retreat is \$70 which includes 3 meals, a t-shirt, and materials. The deadline to register is Friday, October 25 at 5:00pm. Click [HERE](#) to register now. If you have any questions, please reach out to Andrea Hayes at (334)324-6104.

Joining SUNDAY

ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27 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.

PANAMA

LEARN AND SERVE

EXPERIENCE

JUNE 29 - JULY 7

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.



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, 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.

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.

FIRST CHURCH BIRMINGHAM

JUSTICE & MERCY OCTOBER OPPORTUNITIES

THE BLUE WAGON donation item for the month of October is hygiene products for the women at the Lovelady Center. Suggested items can be found by clicking [HERE](#). Simply place them in the Blue Wagon near the Welcome Center throughout the month and they will be delivered to the Lovelady Center.

THE MAGIC CITY ACCEPTANCE CENTER PROJECT continues to welcome donations of coffee and donuts for their support group. Click [HERE](#) to sign up.

Keep your eyes and ears open for exciting work in the area of Creation Care. Ideas are welcome for how First Church can be a better steward of our Mother Earth.

MEET OUR NEW CHILDREN'S & YOUTH INTERN:

EMILY CAMERON!

We are absolutely thrilled to introduce the newest member of our team, Emily Cameron! As the Children's and Youth Intern at First Church, Emily brings a vibrant energy and a deep passion for ministry that we are excited to welcome.

Click [HERE](#) to read more.



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17 AT SUMO

MOM'S *Night Out*

Calling all moms and guardians! We're excited to invite you to Mom's Night Out on **THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17** at **7:00PM** at **SUMO** in Hoover. This is your chance to enjoy an evening of fellowship and stimulating conversation—without the kids! Reach out to Jessica Yarbrough at jessicay731@gmail.com with any questions.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Missionary Journeys of Paul
CRUISE

OCTOBER 8 - 20

IN MID-OCTOBER 25 INDIVIDUALS CONNECTED WITH FIRST CHURCH WILL BE JOINING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR A CRUISE TO EXPLORE CAIRO, EGYPT AS WELL AS IMPORTANT CITIES IN GREECE AND TURKEY AS WE STUDY PAUL'S 2ND AND 3RD MISSIONARY JOURNEYS. PARTICIPANTS WILL BE TRAVELING FROM OCTOBER 8 THROUGH 20 AND WE INVITE YOU TO HOLD EACH PERSON IN PRAYER. PLEASE NOTE THAT TWO OF OUR CLERGY WILL BE TRAVELING WITH THE TEAM. REV. HERB ROBERTSON HAS AGREED TO HELP COVER PREACHING AND PASTORAL ON-CALL RESPONSIBILITIES ALONG WITH OUR EXECUTIVE PASTOR REV. KATIE GILBERT. [CLICK HERE](#) FOR A FULL LIST OF PARTICIPANTS.

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