



First Christian Visitor

“Where the Grace of God Awaits You.”

[visit us at : www.fcc-bhm.org](http://www.fcc-bhm.org) or call us at: 991-5000

VOLUME 4 NUMBER 49 December 11, 2012

MISSION IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The Region seeks to empower and challenge congregations to impact their communities through Christian witness and service. Working with Week of Compassion and the Office of Disciples Volunteering, the Region served as a catalyst for congregations seeking to be a part of recovery efforts following the deadly tornadoes that ripped through Alabama in 2011. Two congregations became mission stations, hosting groups of Disciples from around the country as they came to work in recovery efforts. The Region encourages and celebrates many specific ministries of congregations that are aimed at meeting community needs. Such ministries have included after-school programs and tutoring, feeding/clothing ministries, Family Promise partnership, pre-school ministries, adult day care, recreational ministries, HIV/AIDS education, and much more. Disciples congregations, often assisted and even funded by the Region, are providing a Christian witness as they engage in ministries that are strengthening communities.

The Region sponsors Miracle Days every two years. Miracle Days are occasions for persons to gather in unity from all across the Region at a particular location for hands-on ministry to increase the host congregation's capacity for ministry in its community. There have been 7 Miracle Days sponsored by the Region since 2000, the most recent one at Madison Christian Church in June, 2012.

Through its Anti-Racism Team, the Region continues to challenge its congregations to pay attention to the continuing division that exists in society due to racial discrimination. Structures and systems in which some are privileged and others disadvantaged are to be dismantled in the name of Christ. The Region is committed to its identity of being an anti-racist institution, yet it recognizes we have a long way to go to achieve true justice for all in our world.

All gifts to the 2012 Christmas Offering will be directed to the ministries of the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region. Please give generously!

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT COMMUNION SERVICES

On Christmas Eve we will have two worship services to celebrate the birth of Christ.

The first service is at 7:00 p.m. It will be a contemporary service that will be family and child friendly. Mary Pat will share the Christmas message for this service.

The second service will be a traditional service at 11:00 p.m. Edd will portray the innkeeper of Bethlehem at this service. Both services will have the congregation walk forward to receive the Communion. Also, they will both end with the congregation singing “Silent Night” by candlelight. The nursery will be open for both services.

SPENCERS' CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE

Everyone is invited to the Christmas Open House at the Spencers' on Sunday, December 16, from 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm. We are expecting a wonderful group of people. Therefore, please consider coming for the time period listed below. Please remember you may come at any time but the schedule is helpful because of the size of our home.

Last Name A-G 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm
Last Name H-M 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Last Name N-Z 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm

CHRISTMAS CANTATA

December 16

Please join the Chancel Choir, Danielle Alderson, Edd Spencer, Jim Baxter, and a host of shepherds, wise men, angel, and Mary and Joseph as we bring you the Christmas Story in music, story, song, and drama. The Christmas Cantata this year is Sunday morning, December 16, during morning worship. Rediscover the magic and mystery of Christmas through the eyes of a young shepherd boy as his older self recalls that amazing night that Jesus was born, when he as a little boy was helping his father in the fields. This beautiful musical celebration weaves scripture, carols, and visual action into the shepherds story. Come and worship the King of Kings.

HOLIDAY MEMORIAL WREATH

A wreath is a traditional part of the holidays. Every Sunday we light a advent candle on the advent wreath. This year we want to add a new wreath to our worship on Christmas Sunday, December 23rd. We will light five candles on a Holiday Memorial Wreath. The five candles of grief, courage, memory, love and hope will provide a glow that gives us a source of hopefulness as we remember loved ones and friends who have gone to be with God. As we light the candles we will whisper our thanksgiving for our loved ones and open our hearts to receive God's healing mercy.

YOUNG ADULT SUNDAY

The last Sunday of 2012 will be Young Adult Sunday. It will be a service where we celebrate the wonderful young adults in the life of our church. This year Collins Henderson Brown will share the sermon along with other young adults serving as worship leaders. Come on Sunday, December 30th as our young adults lead us in the worship of the One born in Bethlehem.

A WORD FROM YOUR PASTORS

With very small things and a little trust, God can do some very big things. With Moses' rod, God divided the sea. With David's slingshot and stone, a great giant was killed. A small boy donated five loaves and two fish and 5,000 people were fed. A poor woman put two pennies in the treasury and received the highest praise Jesus ever gave.

And now we live in a season when God brought His grace and power to the world in a little baby born in a manger in Bethlehem. With very small things and a little trust, God can do some very big things.

God is still bringing the kingdom through small things, through people like us. May we trust in God and leave the outcome in His hands.

Merry Christmas,
Edd and Mary Pat

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS - The Christmas poinsettia list is now in the narthex. Please sign up and select a poinsettia in memory or in honor of a loved one. The cost of the poinsettias are **\$17.00**. Checks payable to “FCC”.

SUNDAY'S ATTENDANCE	
WORSHIP	141
SUNDAY SCHOOL	68

First Christian Church
4954 Valleydale Road
Birmingham, AL 35242

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FIRST CHRISTIAN VISITOR (UPS 0195-880) IS PUBLISHED WEEKLY EXCEPT A WEEK IN DECEMBER AND A WEEK IN JULY, BY FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH. **PERIODICAL POSTAGE PAID AT BIRMINGHAM, AL, 35203.** POSTMASTER PLEASE SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO: FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, 4954 VALLEYDALE ROAD, BIRMINGHAM, AL 35242.

Life In Our Community This Week

Sunday, December 16

Third Sunday of Advent

9:00 Sunday School
9:45 Fellowship Moment
10:15 Worship Service – Christmas Cantata
11:15 A Moment of Prayer with Elders
2:00 – 5:00 Spencers' Christmas Open House
Monday – Thursday
9:30 – 1:30 The Adventure Nook Preschool
Monday, December 17
7:00 Men's Bible Study
10:00 Staff Meeting
Tuesday, December 18
9:45 Chapel - "The Christmas Story"
10:00 Ladies Bible Study
Wednesday, December 19
6:30 Music Department Christmas Party at Jan Watts
Thursday, December 20
The Adventure Nook breaks for Christmas

GRACE NOTES

- ⋄ There will be no Children's Worship & Wonder on Sunday, December 16. Instead, the children are invited to stay in the sanctuary with their families and experience worship in the form of the Cantata.
- ⋄ **Give Blood!** During this season of giving, remember to give blood, the gift of life, at the Red Cross office on Caldwell Mill Rd, behind Bruster's. Thanks for making a difference in Laura Langley's memory at this special time of the year.
- ⋄ We celebrate the marriage of Wayne and Billye Dutt.
- ⋄ Our prayers are with Nickey Rudd and Conlee Alderson who are both resting at home from surgery.

CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR YOU

The church has a gift for you on Sunday, December 23rd, and to be opened on Christmas Day. Please recycle the box as a Blessing Box. Merry Christmas to everyone.

LOOKING AHEAD

Sunday, December 16 - Christmas Cantata
"A Shepherd's Tale"
Sunday, December 23 - Christmas Sunday and Holy Baptism
Monday, December 24 - Christmas Eve Communion
Sunday, December 30 - Young Adult Recognition Sunday,
Collins Brown Preaching

CHURCH CHRISTMAS PARTIES AND CELEBRATIONS

Saturday, December 15, 6:00 pm

Advocates Bible Study Christmas Party at
Russell Fountain's

Sunday, December 16, 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Spencers' Christmas Open House

Wednesday, December 19, at 6:30 pm

Music Program Christmas Party at Bill & Jan Watts.

If your party or celebration is not listed, please call the church office.

CHRISTMAS FOR THE STAFF

Christmas time is the time for gifts of appreciation and love. During the season of Advent, we will have a decorated Christmas box in the narthex for you to place your gift for the staff of First Christian. Please note on your check that it is a "gift for the church staff." You may also mail your gift to the church, care of Fletcher Hamilton. Please remember our staff and all the many extras that they have done for us this year. We are fortunate to have them and appreciate their ministry to us.

Thank you, Fletcher Hamilton, Chair of the Personnel Committee

END OF THE YEAR GIFTS

Every year we are blessed with end of the year gifts to our church. If you can share an end of the year gift through a sale of stock or a special love gift from the blessings you have received this past year, please contact the church office. Thank you for your love, prayer, and support of the church.

OUR COMMITMENTS

First Christian is a great church. It is made up of wonderful believers. May we all join hands and hearts in a loving effort to do what Jesus asked us to do. If you have not yet had the opportunity to make your commitment, please mail it or bring it to the church office by Christmas Sunday, December 23. Commitment cards and envelopes are available in the narthex. Together we can demonstrate our love for Him who once proved His love for us.

SHARE THE LIGHT

Our CYF youth will once again accept your donations of \$5.00 or more in honor or memory of a loved one. These donations will help the youth to Spread the Light of Christ to others through their mission trips. In addition, the youth have created a special Christmas card as a gift to you - to share with others, in lieu of a Christmas gift. It is often difficult at times to find that "perfect gift" for our family and friends or for those we love the most. However, when you give a gift to the Spread the Light project, you will help the youth spread the Light of Christ to others. You will be able to send your friends a Christmas card letting them know you have honored them with this special gift. Also, your name and those you have honored will be placed in our Christmas Eve bulletins as well as our office window. As always, thank you for your love and support of our youth programs here at First Christian Church.

THE LAST VISITOR OF THE YEAR

Please remember we will not mail out a Visitor the last week in December, the 24th - 28th as per our bulk mail permit. The Visitor for next week will be our last one for the year. Thank you, the Church Office.

CHRISTIAN COMRADES SUNDAY LESSON

Sunday, December 16

Messianic Psalms

THE DISCIPLES

Sunday, December 16

Unity in the Body of Christ

Ephesians 4: 1-16

A PRAYER FOR ADVENT

Those who waited in darkness, O Lord, have seen a great light, and on them has the light descended. Send the light again, Lord, to shine in our darkness of doubt, the darkness of sin, the darkness of loneliness, the darkness of fear and confusion. Let the presence of Jesus laid in a manger illumine our hearts and minds, that our whole lives may be transformed. May the simplicity of His entrance into the world call us again to the single way of living. May the coming of the shepherds remind us that there is more to do in life than tend our flocks or mind our businesses. May the adoration of the wise men teach us that we too have gifts to bring. May the joy of aged Anna and Simeon suggest patterns for our aging and its relationship to your eternal kingdom. And as the Christmas bells ring out once more across the land, pulling good tidings of great joy, let our small hearts respond with excitement and love, that the light has shined in darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. Amen.

- ♣ The last Sunday of the year has normally been College Recognition Sunday. But this year we are going to call it “Young Adult Recognition Sunday” with Collins Henderson Brown bringing the message, along with our young adults serving as worship leaders.