



First Christian Visitor

“Where the Grace of God Awaits You.”

visit us at : www.fcc-bhm.org or call us at: 991-5000

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A WORD FROM OUR PASTORS

This time last year I was hiking on the Appalachian Trail. Let me now share some brief spiritual thoughts and reflections of my experiences on the trail

As we walk the trail of life, are we walking toward a rugged cliff or a beautiful rainbow?

A field of mountain laurel in full bloom is God's first missionary.

Take life, and each day, a step at a time. Remember you are higher and closer to God than you were the day before.

Animals and hikers destroy trail signs. But in the wilderness when trail signs are destroyed, it is important to remember a sign that man or animal cannot destroy – Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

No matter how wet and cold you are in the wilderness of the mountains, you are always warm and dry on the inside.

And finally, the great words of John Muir, “Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves. *God bless you, Edd & Mary Pat*

YOUNG-AT-HEART Wednesday, August 1

How about a movie date? All you YOUNG-at-HEART, let's ride the bus to the McWane Science Center and see not one, but two movies.. on the huge IMAX screen. “Rescue” and “The Last Reef” will be fun movies to watch, learn, and enjoy. After the movie we will eat lunch at NIKI's West. Our movie date is August (Wednesday) the 1st. Sign up in the narthex and bring a friend. More details on the sign up sheet. Don't we all love a movie date? *Janet*

BLESSED TO BLESS OTHERS?

At FCC, we are blessed to have a wonderful church family and church home. Have you thanked God for these blessings? We urge you to thank God for our blessings at FCC and to ask for his continued grace that we might be a blessing to others. Your blessing box gifts will bless the Salvation Army's Angel Tree children and our own little Carly Chandler via The Carly Fund.

FIFTH SUNDAY POT LUCK

This Sunday, July 29 is our Fifth Sunday Pot luck after morning worship. Bring your favorite dish to share and the church will provide paper products, tableware, and drinks. Invite a friend as we celebrate the joy of the Lord in Christian Fellowship.

A BUSY WEEK

It is a busy week at First Christian. Vacation Bible School in going well with children and their sponsors going deep into God's Word. Painters are in the sanctuary adding a new freshness of beauty to the walls. Soon the church will also be active with new carpet being installed in the sanctuary and family life center, and new cabinets in the church office and work room and sacristy. We praise God for all these blessings.

OUTREACH UPDATE

The Outreach Mission met Sunday, July 15th, to share actions and plans. We are thrilled by the congregational support for local outreach: Camp High Hopes, the Crop Walk, assistance for victims of apartment fires, The Carly Fund, The Debbie Blue Pantry, Backpack Buddies, IES Reading Program, Blessing Boxes, and other efforts are successful because of your support. THANK YOU!

We will continue to take your gifts to the local community and promise to be good stewards of your gifts. Are you interested in helping? Here are a few opportunities:

Backpack Buddies Coordinator. This person enlists the support of others (the Tuesday morning Bible study group has helped with this) to purchase, pack, and deliver 40 bags of approved foods to Vincent Elementary School. Sandy Hamilton did this last year and is willing to answer any questions you may have. If you're interested in serving as the BPB Coordinator for the upcoming school year, please contact Charlotte Brammer, 913-5521. This is fun and rewarding!

Adopt-a-Backpack. It's time to adopt-a-backpack!

On Sunday, July 29th, we'll be distributing backpacks and school supply lists. We've purchased 80 backpacks that need to be stuffed with specific school supplies for students in three local schools: Inverness Elementary, Oak Mountain Elementary, and Vincent Elementary. We'll also be collecting teaching supplies and healthy snacks. Pick up your backpack to stuff and/or a list of needed supplies and approved snacks.

Socks, Shoes, and Underwear. Elementary school children often need shoes, socks, and clean underwear. We'll be collecting these items over the next few weeks. Our school partners tell us they need children's athletic shoes, sizes 12, 13/youth 3,4, 5. They also need children's socks and underwear suitable for elementary school children (primarily kindergarteners). We will be collecting these over the next several weeks. *“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”* Matt. 25:40 (NIV)~Outreach Mission

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR JUNE

	This Month	This Year
Offerings Received	\$40,988.00	\$217,204.62
Offerings Needed	\$31,433.52	\$213,118.39
Total Income	\$39,638.21	\$198,577.62
Total Expense	\$32,706.79	\$180,734.96
Net Income (without TAN)	\$6,931.42	\$17,842.66

SUNDAY'S ATTENDANCE

WORSHIP 142

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, July 29

- 9:00 Sunday School
- 9:45 Fellowship Moment
- 10:15 Worship Service
- 10:30 Children's Worship & Wonder
- 11:15 A Moment of Prayer with Elders
- 11:30 Fifth Sunday Pot Luck Lunch

Monday, July 30

- 7:00 Men's Bible Study
- 10:00 Staff Meeting

Tuesday, July 31

- 7:00 Elder Calls

Wednesday, August 1

- 9:30 Young-At-Heart at the McWane Science Center - Movie and Lunch at Niki's West

Thursday, August 2

- 7:00 Advocates Bible Study

GRACE NOTES

- ⚡ Dear Reverends, I am sorry to have been so long in getting a note off to you. We have just gotten home from ten days that were spent at a beautiful wedding in Houston, Texas; the funeral in Birmingham; and our 40th family reunion in Alabama. A lot of contrasts! We thought the service that you held for our dear Carol Dutt was lovely and we know she would have been very pleased. She loved for celebrations to be appropriate, and I could feel her approval of your tribute to her. Thank you for handling my note to her so warmly. *Lois and Melanie Odom.*
- ⚡ To my Church family, I thank you for the cards, phone calls, visits, food and especially your prayers during my convalescence. I have missed you all and hope to be back in church on a regular basis very soon. *Your friend in Christ, Jane Belcher.*
- ⚡ Please pray for Jamye Mann who is recovering from surgery.
- ⚡ Our hearts go out to the families who lost loved ones in the terrible tragedy of the shootings in Aurora, Colorado.

THE DISCIPLES
Sunday, July 29th
Jehoshaphat Makes Judicial Reforms
2 Chronicles 19: 4-11

CHRISTIAN COMRADES SUNDAY LESSON
Sunday, July 29th
The Life of Paul

Copies of the review to the Constitution are available in the narthex

CHURCH HISTORY - THE CONCLUSION

In July, 2009,. Edd asked me to write some articles about our church history for The Visitor in preparation for our 135th anniversary. I had written a brief history for our 125th anniversary, so I was glad to have this opportunity.

The Disciples of Christ Historical Society defines history as "What was flowing into what is and what will be. An old Rwandan proverb says, "If you don't know where you've come from, you won't know where to go". Remembering our past, we see God's strength in the present and we trust Him with our future.

We owe a debt of gratitude to our ancestors in the faith for the bonds of love and caring that maintain this community we call First Christian Church. We have shared some of our long history, not that we might repeat the past, but that we might take heart from both the struggles and successes. Ours is a history of people coming together in love, sharing and witnessing to the glory of God. This church is a great gathering place of those in our past, those present now, and those yet to come. It is good for us to recall how God has worked through all of the saints who have led us through the years.

God has used this church to do great things. Ask anyone who has found faith and inspiration at Hargis Christian Retreat. Ask the children of Andros Island who have received loving ministry from our missions among them. Ask our High Hopes campers who are ministered to with such loving care at overnight camp and at spring and fall Care sessions. We can be very proud of the outreach ministry of this church.

We have had a wonderful youth ministry with dedicated and committed sponsors. It's amazing what our youth have been able to accomplish on their mission trips and with local outreach ministries. More than 20 young people from our congregation have gone into various areas of ministry as Timothys and Priscillas, including several who went into the foreign mission field.

The men and women of our church have worked tirelessly through their organizations for our needs and for the needs of our community. We have been blessed with a great Sunday School program with dedicated teachers through the years. We have ministered through The Adventure Nook for the past 25 years. We have also been blessed with outstanding ministers, interim ministers, music directors and pianists/organists.

Now God is calling us to do great things in the future. No history is ever complete. It is my prayer and hope that our church will continue to grow through those who are yet to come, bringing with them their individual styles, strengths and services to be united and blended with those we now possess. We will also continue to grow because of that "great unseen cloud of witnesses" who have gone before us and who worked to make our church what it is today, inspiring and influencing us to continue their work. May First Christian Church provide a source of spiritual stamina and strength to all who come here and to all who go out beyond these walls.~Claradel