

First Christian Visitor

"Where the Grace of God Awaits You."

www.fcc-bhm.org

VOLUME X NUMBER 05 JANUARY 29, 2008



Lent is the season of forty days, not counting Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday. Lent comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *lencten* which means spring. The season is a preparation for celebrating Easter. Historically, Lent began as a period of fasting and preparation for baptism by converts, and then became a time for penance by all Christians. Our first service of worship during this most holy season will be our Ash Wednesday service on February 6th at 7:00 pm. On Thursday, February 14th we will begin our weekly Lenten fellowship dinners and worship services. Dinner and fellowship will begin at 6:15 pm and worship will follow at 7:00 pm. We have changed the day of the week from Wednesday to Thursday to allow those who work to have more time for dinner and fellowship before the worship service begins, and it will also allow us not to conflict with choir practice on Wednesday evening. Worship is the heart and soul of our ministry at FCC. Please make a commitment to yourself and your Lord to be a part of this opportunity for spiritual renewal.

"Let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the Lord our maker." *Psalms 95:6*

WHY IS THE BEGINNING OF LENT CALLED "ASH WEDNESDAY?"

Many Christians attend special services of public worship on the first day of Lent, called Ash Wednesday. The name is the result of a tradition in which the pastor or priest burns the palm leaves which have remained from the previous year's Palm Sunday and, after blessing the ashes, uses them to mark a cross on the foreheads of the worshippers with the words, "Remember, Mankind, that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." (Genesis 3:19). The mark is worn on the worshipper's forehead throughout the day as a symbol of their sorrow for their sins. From biblical times the art of sprinkling oneself with ashes has been a sign of repentance for sin, especially when the sinner is bold enough to approach Almighty God in prayer. When Job, for instance, came to appreciate the holiness of God and his own state of sinfulness, he said, "My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you, Therefore, I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes (Job 42:5). The first day of Lent is the time when Christians demonstrate their humility before the throne of God with the mark of ashes. We will worship in humility on Ash Wednesday, Wednesday February 6 at 7:00 pm in the sanctuary. Come and bring a friend.

CHRISTIAN COMRADES SUNDAY LESSON

"Summoned To Labor!"

Luke 10:1-12, 17-20

ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP
Wednesday, February 6 at 7:00 pm

We will begin the season of Lent with an Ash Wednesday service on Wednesday, February 6 at 7:00 pm in the sanctuary. This service will have special music by the choir, a meditation on The Body of Jesus, His Voice, Eyes and Hands, and walking forward to receive the Mark of the Cross on our foreheads and Holy Communion. The nursery will be open for childcare. Invite a friend to this service and all of our Lenten services as we proclaim Jesus as Lord and Savior.

THURSDAY NIGHT LENTEN SUPPERS AND WORSHIP

Every Thursday night during Lent we will have the opportunity to gather in the Family Life Center at 6:15 for supper. Different groups will provide the meals with the cost being \$5.00 for adults and older children, \$3.00 for children 4 through 11, and children under 4 are free. Following the meal at 7:00 pm, we will have a thirty minute Lenten worship service in the Farkas room. The service will focus on the thoughts of Joyce Rupp from her book, "The Cup of Our Life." We will discover how the ordinary cups we use each day can become sacred vessels that connect us with life and draw us closer to God. The schedule for each service on the Cups is as follows:

February 14	<i>The Cup of Life</i>
February 21	<i>The Chipped Cup</i>
February 28	<i>The Broken Cup</i>
March 6	<i>The Styrofoam Cup</i>
March 13	<i>The Cup of Blessing</i>

All of these services will begin at 7:00 pm following the meal and will last thirty minutes, ending at 7:30 pm. Reservations for the meal can be made on the reservation chart in the narthex or call the church office. If you can't come to the meal, please attend the worship service at 7:00 pm. Childcare is provided for both the meal and the worship service.

Notice of Special Called Congregational Meeting Sunday, February 10, 2008

The purpose of this meeting will be to hold an election for the office of Elder. The Elders have submitted the nomination of Georgia Flora to this office. Please make your plans to attend this brief meeting immediately following morning worship.

MANY BAKERS, MINI LOAVES

Volunteers are needed to bake mini loaves of bread for use at the Regional Event, "Can You Hear Me Now?" These loaves can be a recipe of your choice, wrapped to share with those gathered at the event. Can you help? Our church has been asked to provide at least 60 mini loaves. Please call Clarissa, 969-2261 or sign up in the narthex. Thank you!

LAST SUNDAY'S ATTENDANCE

WORSHIP	135
SUNDAY SCHOOL	53

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: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO: FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, 4954 VALLEYDALE ROAD, BIRMINGHAM, AL 35242.

Life In Our Community This Week

Sunday, February 3

- 9:00 Sunday School
- 10:00 Worship
- 11:30 Ona/Ruth at Surin 280
- 5:30 Super Bowl Parties for Youth

Monday, February 4

- 7:00 Men's Bible Study on Job
- 10:00 Staff Meeting
- 7:00 Lydia Meets at the Pasky's

Tuesday, February 5

- 9:45 Chapel
- Primary Election in narthex
- 6:30 Scale Back Alabama Class
- In the Farkas Room
- 6:30 PEPP Program in Genesis Room
- 7:00 Church Growth Calls

Wednesday, February 6

- 9:45 Chapel
- 6:30 Choir Practice
- 7:00 Ash Wednesday Service

Friday, February 8

- 7:30 Worship Service with Dr. Fred Craddock

Saturday, February 9

- 9:00-2:00 "Can You Hear Me Now?" Regional Event

GRACE NOTES

- † Logan Brown rededicated his life to the Lord this past Sunday. God Bless you Logan.
- † Please pray for Kay Keith, who is resting at home from surgery.
- † We celebrate that Cece is feeling better and is now back at work.
- † Our prayers are with Roe Vaughn, who is in Shelby Baptist with pneumonia.

TWENTY-FOUR HOUR PRAYER VIGIL
Thursday, March 20 – March 21

We are having a Twenty-Four Hour Prayer Vigil beginning at 9:00 pm on Thursday, March 20th and ending at 9:00 pm on Friday, March 21st. The Prayer Vigil will be in the sanctuary with each person praying at their special time. A prayer chart consisting of 48 thirty minute prayer periods is in the narthex. During the Prayer Vigil, there will be material available for reflection and prayer. There will also be security in the parking lot for those praying in the sanctuary during the night hours.

YOUR WAY HAS BEEN PAID

As a gift from this church to attend the Regional event titled, "Can You Hear Me Now?" (Discerning God's Call to Transformation). The event begins Friday evening, Feb 8th at 7:30 pm with the world renowned Fred Craddock preaching. Come early as the community has been invited. The event continues Saturday morning with workshops with outstanding clergy and lay people as the presenters. Workshops include, "Transformation 101", led by Dick Hamm, former General Minister and President of the Christian Church. Other workshops include "Leading for Transformation", "The Spiritual Grounding for Transformation", and "Tools for Transformation". A delicious lunch will be prepared by our own Buzz DeVore. Following lunch, the workshops will be repeated so you can attend two of the three. Closing worship with communion will be at 1:30 pm and led by Clarissa Harms, Susan Diamond and Mary Pat. Do not pass up this great opportunity to hear Fred Craddock and learn more about what Transformation means for us as Christians and as a church. Please sign up today in the narthex so we will have a lunch count.

JOINED TOGETHER IN WITNESS

We celebrate that First Christian Church is in partnership with 60 other Christian churches in Alabama-NW Florida in sharing the love of God in Jesus Christ. To lift up this ministry of cooperation, the region of Alabama-NW Florida has produced a Pictorial Tribute of the congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Alabama-Northwest Florida. This wonderful book has a picture of every church in the region. Along with pictures of the outside and inside of each church, there is a brief history of each congregation. The books are \$50 each with order forms available on the Welcome Table in the narthex. Please consider buying a copy to support this ministry.

2007 CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS!

2007 Contribution Statements will be in the narthex Sunday, January 27. Please stop by, search the box (they will be in alphabetical order by last name) and retrieve your statement. If you do not see your statement, or if you find an error on your statement, please contact Cece. After the month of February, the statements will be in the church office. No statements will be mailed out unless you call and request it. Thanks! Cece

SOUPER BOWL OF CARING Until
SOUP-ER BOWL SUNDAY - FEBRUARY 3

The Chi Rho and CYF youth groups would like to encourage everyone to participate with them in SOUP-ER Bowl Sunday by bringing cans of soup or gifts of money to be shared with the Oak Mountain Ministries.

The Souper Bowl of Caring is the result of thousands of young people joining together to fight

hunger and poverty in their local communities. This unique, youth-led movement of caring is transforming the nation's biggest weekend of football into its largest weekend of giving. Since this program started in 1990, over \$41 million has been raised for local charities across the country.

Our youth here at First Christian would like you to join them in making a difference in our community. Our goal is both \$200.00 in cash and 200 cans of soup that will be shared directly with the Oak Mountain Ministries, which offers a food ministry helping area shelter and agencies. They make regular deliveries to the Black Belt region, delivering clothing, usable items and food. Please bring your donations to church on the next three Sundays or during the week and place in one of the boxes. Thank you in advance for helping us help others. For more information on how you can help go to www.souperbowl.org.

YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE IN 2008

The following are some wonderful opportunities to serve our Lord at First Christian in 2008. Please choose one and notify Libby, Barry, Edd or Mary Pat.

Worship Mission: Responsible for all Sunday morning worship services and special services such as Christmas and Easter.

Education Mission: Responsible for Sunday school of all ages, youth work and the total education program of the church.

Evangelism Mission: Responsible for bringing new members into the life of the church.

Fellowship Mission: Responsible for providing a social life and fellowship activities for the church.

Administration Mission: Responsible for the financial program, maintenance of property and general administration policies and throughout for the church.

Outreach Mission: Responsible for giving to the needy within Birmingham and throughout the world.

Membership Mission: Responsible for care and nurturing of church members.

MISSION COUNCIL

The following is a list of our Mission Council 2008. We are blessed as a church to have this fine leadership. May God bless our Mission Council at First Christian as we serve the Lord in 2008.

Mission Council 2008

- Moderator - Libby Carpenter
- Moderator Elect -Barry Storer
- Secretary - Lisa Burdette
- Treasurer - Twila Tyree
- Chair of Elders - Clarissa Harms & Bud Flora
- Voting Elder - Ellis Hill
- Voting Elder - Jill Pasky
- Chair of Diaconate - Ginny White
- Voting Deacon - Susan Storer
- Voting Deacon - Julie Henderson
- Voting Deacon - Bob Lamb
- Voting Deacon - Pepper Edwards
- Chair of Trustees - Hugh Henderson
- Member at Large - Pat Deaton
- Member at Large - Russ Favorite
- Worship Mission - Jim & Beverly Baxter
- Administration Mission - Mike Mee
- Education Mission - Joye Taylor
- Evangelism Mission -Fletcher & Sandy Hamilton
- Fellowship Mission - Ann Horne & Carole Rudd

Membership Mission - Pat Favorite
Outreach Mission - Sharon & Elizabeth Orazine

MISSION TRIP REFLECTION

This poem was written during the recent work mission trip from First Christian to rebuild homes hit by Hurricane Katrina. We were housed in Grace Disciples of Christ Church in Covington, Louisiana, and worked on a home in Slidell. They host groups every week and are a really small congregation in size, but not in heart.

The Power of One

I've been inspired by this church. I read you were once at a crossroads, considering whether your doors should close, when Katrina hit and you became a mission station instead. Through your doors countless volunteers have passed through your building, slept on your floors, enjoyed your showers and refreshing water, and partaken of your weekly potlucks. You have the gift of hospitality – You offer shelter to equip some to serve others, and in doing so multiply your witness tenfold across the nation, impacting the volunteers and your own community. You are an example in action of the parable of the talents. Well done, good and faithful servants.
Valya Mobley

**First Christian Church To Host
Dr. Fred B. Craddock
World renowned preacher
Friday, February 8, 2008 at 7:30 PM**

There is no cost to attend this worship service. This worship service precedes the one-day Regional event on congregational transformation, "Can You Hear Me Now?" (Discerning God's Call to Transformation), which will also be held at our church. All members and friends of our congregation are urged to attend and bring a friend. We at First Christian Church are honored and privileged to have such a well known preacher at our church. Plan now to attend.

EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE & BREAKFAST

Our Easter Sunrise Worship and Breakfast is Easter Sunday, at 6:30 am at the outdoor amphitheater at Hargis Retreat. Following the service, breakfast will be served in the Hargis dining room at a cost of \$5.75 for adults and children 6 and over, \$3.75 for ages 3-5, and children 2 years and under are free. The Easter Sunrise Service will focus on the sun and the Son. A celebration of the light of the sun for creation and the Light of the World in Jesus. Following the service, we will gather around the table for a fantastic breakfast with great food and fellowship as we celebrate the risen Lord. Please sign up for reservations in the narthex or call the church office. 991-9573

980-1827
678-2440