

First Christian Visitor

“Where the Grace of God Awaits You.”

www.fcc-bhm.org

VOLUME 1 NUMBER 50 DECEMBER 22, 2009



A WORD FROM YOUR PASTORS

THINGS WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED

Thank you Lord for a wonderful year. We have been blessed as a church in 2009. The following are some of the blessings that we have received.

- Persons accepting Christ and persons having their lives transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Persons coming to First Christian as new members and friends of the church.
- A fantastic Worship & Wonder experience for our children to learn the sacred stories of the Bible.
- A fabulous new church bus that will enable children, youth and adults to take journeys in safety and comfort.
- A wonderful new church sign with a cross on top pointing to the glory of God and directing people to the church.
- A beautiful Columbarium in the Prayer Garden providing a holy place for members and friends to lift up the promise of eternal life.
- Another successful Sacred Harp Music Convention at our church.
- A Vacation Bible School experience called Jerusalem Marketplace that brought children and adults together in a spirit of bible times.
- The 135th Anniversary Service and Celebration Dinner where over 270 people praised the Lord for the history of First Christian, “Where the Grace of God Awaits All of Us.”
- A fantastic Summer Musical and Picnic by our choir and community called “A 20th Century Celebration”.
- Recognition by the leadership of the Christian Church (DOC) that First Christian is in the top 100 churches in the United States and Canada in outreach giving to others.
- The youth group mission trip to Philadelphia where they shared ministry with God’s children in the inner city.
- And so much more! Praise the Lord for our year together as Disciples of Christ!

Merry Christmas, Edd & Mary Pat

PLEDGE REPORT

We have received 53 pledges that represent \$224,268.00 toward our budget for 2010. If you have not made your pledge, please return your pledge card soon. We all need to share in our part of supporting the Lord’s work at First Christian.

CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS

We would like to take this opportunity to wish each of you a Merry Christmas and a most Happy and Healthy New Year. It is a blessing to serve our Lord in this congregation. We also would like to thank you for your love gift to each of us during this Holy Season. May the Lord of Love and Joy surround each of you this day and always. Your Staff, Edd, Mary Pat, Jan, David, Cece, Chris, Beth, Mary, Jennifer, and Lloyd.

COLLEGE RECOGNITION SUNDAY SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27

Traditionally, the last Sunday in December is set aside as College Recognition Sunday. It is a time that we recognize our college students and invite them to lead us in our worship service. We are blessed here at First Christian with young adults who have volunteered to lead us in worship on this special Sunday. We are looking forward to hearing Laura Langley, who will bring us the morning message. Also, Hannah Harms, Keith Henderson, Collins Henderson, Megan Alderson, Sarah Alderson, and Joel Carpenter will serve as worship leaders.

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT COMMUNION SERVICE

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

The first service is at 7:00 pm. It will be a Contemporary Service that will be family and child friendly. This service will include the song, “Come On Ring Those Bells”, and everyone is encouraged to bring your favorite bell to church to ring in honor of the Lord’s birthday. The service will also have a children’s moment, Holy Baptism, an upbeat anthem by the choir, “Advent Jubilation”, and favorite Christmas stories by Edd & Mary Pat. The nursery will be open.

The second service will be a Traditional service at 11:00 pm. This service will be more formal and will be by candlelight. The only light in the sanctuary will be the Christmas Tree and candles. This service will consist of a solo of “O Holy Night”, by Jan, along with a sermon by Edd.

Both services will have the worshippers walking forward to receive communion. Also, they will both end with the congregation singing Silent Night by candlelight.

Where the Grace of God Awaits You.”

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 27

- 9:00 Sunday school
- 10:00 College Recognition Sunday
- Thursday, December 31
- New Year’s Eve
- Offices close at noon

GRACE NOTES

- † Chris and her family would like to express their heart felt thanks for all of your cards, kind thoughts and prayers in the loss of her mom.
- † Our sympathy is expressed to Jan Watts and family in the loss of Jan’s Aunt, Maxine Judd Coleman. Memorials are requested to go to the Music Department.
- † We celebrate with Jason and Allison Mirabito the dedication of their son Dominic.

NEW CHURCH WEBSITE
www.fcc-bhm.org

New Church Website went live **Saturday December 12.** The new site is loaded with new features, and we think you’ll find it a tremendous improvement over the old site. Not only is it very user friendly and aesthetically pleasing, but it is also very functional. The intent of the new design was not only to modernize it, but also to make it as informative and functional as possible - not only for current church members and friends of the church, but also for people that happen upon our site through search engines by people potentially searching for a new church home.

- Here are just a few features of the new website:
- A ‘First Visit’ tab which is prominently displayed at the top of the website, giving a potential first time visitor details on ‘what to expect’ when they visit our church – everything on what to wear and where to park, to details of communion.
 - Videos and slideshows.
 - The ability to not only view upcoming events, but also to register for upcoming events if they require registration, and for upcoming events that require a fee, you can even pay it online with your debit or credit card.
 - Also, through Pay Pal we now have the ability to make our pledges and tithes which will be recorded in your giving statement.
 - An online (confidential) prayer request that goes directly to our co-pastors.
 - A wonderful new section called ‘What Members and Friends Think of FCC’, which are heartfelt testimonials of some of our

New Website continued...

church members, sharing their thoughts about our church family.

- Many great new features kind of on the technical end, here are just a few:
 - Hidden keywords enabling search engines such as Google to find our website when someone is searching for churches in our area.
 - Google Analytics, which enables us to monitor and track visits to the site, how long the user stayed on each tab, etc.
 - A new content management system, that allows us to much more fluidly update content, including photographs, videos, and slideshows. We can easily change the notification email for different ministries – for example, if we create an event for the monthly Men’s Meeting, we could place the men’s ministry chair’s email address in the system, so he gets notification when someone registers for the monthly men’s meeting – so no worries if you forgot to ‘sign the sheet in the narthex’, just go to the web at your own convenience to register.

It is our prayer and hope that the new website will be optimally used to the Glory of God, and that it will become a ministry and central point of communication and information. We believe that it can be a wonderful tool and a central point for bringing together all ministries from the youth groups to the elders, from the music ministry to the school (TAN), and everyone in between. We who administer the site welcome participation from all ministries, whether it is information for upcoming events you’d like to see posted on the site, or videos or photos made at events you’d like to see posted, or even a suggestion of something you think would be useful.

We want to make the new website a ‘first thought’ and not an ‘after thought’ when it comes to communications regarding any ministry.

We greatly appreciate your prayers as well as your participation in this ministry. www.fcc-bhm.org

Thanks, Webmasters: Nick Cotruvo, Charles Daniels, and Jeff Eady

SUNDAY’S ATTENDANCE	
SUNDAY SCHOOL	51
WORSHIP	158

CHRISTIAN COMRADES SUNDAY LESSON	
Sunday, January 3 rd	
“Proclaimed in Baptism”	
Matthew 3: 1-6, 11-17	