

# First Christian Visitor

*“Where the Grace of God Awaits You.”*

[www.fcc-bhm.org](http://www.fcc-bhm.org)

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## A CHRISTMAS WORD FROM YOUR PASTORS

Do you know what you are going to get for Christmas? One of the sad things about being an adult, is that you usually do. It is not that way when you are a child. For a child, the exciting part of Christmas is not knowing what you are going to get. To be ready for surprises.

In a sense, that is what happened that first Christmas. God gave to the world what it did not expect. Christmas was a complete surprise.

Christmas was a surprise because God came down to earth as a person. As the Bible says, “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” Think about it. God born as a helpless baby, completely dependent upon parents for food and shelter and clothes and love. He was a boy, a baby boy, a young boy, a teenager, a young man, and He was not sheltered from life. Christ faced all the experiences of life, the joys as well as the sorrows. He came as a person to face life and all that it had to offer.

Therefore, because God came as a person, there is no experience we ever face that He does not understand. No one knows us like He does. He became like us. What a wonderful surprise.

Also Christmas was a surprise because God came in forgiving love and not vengeful judgment. What Christ came to do was to bring light into darkness, hope to despair, life instead of death. He did not come to condemn, but to offer the redeeming hope of love and forgiveness and life.

The surprise of Christmas is that God comes in Christ to look at each one of us and tells us that He loves us and wants us to be His children. But deep down inside, we know we don’t deserve His love. We have not lived the way we ought to live, or loved the way we ought to love, or served the way we ought to serve. We have not always been the kind of people that we should be and that would be pleasing to God. He knows all that. Still, knowing what we are like, He comes down to climb on a cross and say to each one of us, “You can be my children and know what it is to be forgiven. You can know what it is to have life and love, and grace and have it not for a day, but forever.

At Christmas, God came as Christ, not with a hand lifted in anger and judgment, but with a cross lifted in love and forgiveness. That gift, which we don’t deserve, is ours.

We hope that this Christmas, all of us will receive a surprise gift – the gift of God coming as a person in Jesus, to give us love and forgiveness.

*Merry Christmas, Edd & Mary Pat*

## CHRISTIAN COMRADES SUNDAY LESSON

**Sunday, December 13<sup>th</sup>**

**“Prophets Foreshadow Messiah’s Birth”**

**Isaiah 7:13-17, Luke 1:30-38**

## SUNDAY’S ATTENDANCE

**SUNDAY SCHOOL                      61**  
**WORSHIP                                157**

## SHARING YOUR COMMITMENT

Please return your commitment card to the church office. Everyone is encouraged to share as we serve the Lord together at First Christian.

Below is the proposed budget for 2010. These figures lift up our ministry as a church for the new year. Please call Libby Carpenter or Gary Franklin if you have any questions.

Administration	\$ 29,427
Property & Maintenance	\$ 106,467
Communications	\$ 3,500
Personnel	\$ 287,135
Stewardship	\$ 900
Fellowship	\$ 1,012
Worship	\$ 2,503
Membership	\$ 2,825
Evangelism	\$ 2,500
Music	\$ 9,050
Education	\$ 9,700
Outreach	\$ 6,750
BMF & Local Outreach (11%)	\$ 50,795
<b>Total FCC Budget</b>	<b>\$ 512,563</b>

## CHRISTMAS CANTATA Sunday, December 13<sup>th</sup>

Each year during the Christmas season we pause to consider the miracle of Christ’s birth. This year our cantata is “The Mystery and the Majesty” celebrating in music and words the “beautiful impossible” of the Incarnation. From jubilant glorias to gentle manger lullabies, this inspirational cantata celebrates the wonder and splendor of Christmas. The choir invites you to come worship with us on Sunday morning, December 13 @ 10am in the sanctuary where you will hear traditional carols, new songs, and beautiful poetry; all expressing the great signs of Christmas that dazzle the mind and delight the spirit. Assemble with us to decorate our sacred spaces with the music of our faith as we once again proclaim the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. As we worship together, may our hearts overflow with the mystery and majesty of Christmas.

## SPREAD THE LIGHT

The CYF youth invite you to help them “Spread the Light of Christ” during this Advent season as we prepared to honor the Christ Child. We can each honor the Christ in those we love as well as those who have touched our lives by donating \$5.00 in honor or memory of someone who has shared Christ’s light with you. The CYF will be in the narthex Dec. 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, to receive your donations. The names of those you honor will be placed in both our Christmas Eve bulletins, displayed on the office windows and also on our website @[www.fcc-bhm.org](http://www.fcc-bhm.org). This way you may share our site with those you love. Thank you in advance for helping us spread Christ’s light. Your donations will help the youth on their mission trip.

First Christian Church  
4954 Valleydale Road

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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 13

- 9:00 Sunday school
- 10:00 Worship – Christmas Cantata
- 11:30 All-Church Christmas Dinner
- 12:00 Ona/Ruth after the dinner
- 5:30 Parables of Luke
- 5:30 Youth & Children Groups
- 6:45 Snack Supper

Monday, December 14

- 7:00 Men’s Bible Study
- 10:00 Staff meeting

Tuesday, December 15

- 9:45 Chapel featuring “The Christmas Story” with Mary Pat
- 10:00 The Christmas Village & Santa
- 7:00 Elder Calls

Wednesday, December 16

- 9:45 Chapel featuring “The Christmas Story” with Mary Pat
- 6:30 Music Dept. Christmas Party at Jan Watts

Saturday, December 19

- 12:00 Comrades Christmas Party at Nickey & Carole Rudd’s

CHURCH CHRISTMAS PARTIES

- Sunday, Dec. 13, 11:30 – All-Church Christmas Dinner
- Wednesday, Dec. 16, 6:30 – Music Dept. Christmas Party at Jan Watts
- Saturday, Dec. 19, 12:00 – Comrades Christmas Party at Carole & Nickey Rudd’s
- Sunday, Dec. 20, 5:30 – Youth Christmas Party  
The Youth Christmas Party will be held at Edd & Mary Pat’s home
- Monday, Dec. 21, 7:00 – Men’s Bible Study Christmas Breakfast
- Monday, Dec. 21, 6:30 – Mission Council Christmas Party at Libby Carpenters

CHILDREN’S YOUTH GROUP CHRISTMAS PARTY

The Bible Buddies and the Kool Kids will join together for the Christmas party. They will meet at the church at 2:00 on Sunday, Dec. 20<sup>th</sup> and travel by the church van to the McWane Center for a Polar Express Pajama Party. There they will watch the Polar Express on the IMAX screen and have hot chocolate and cookies with Santa. The cost will be \$10 for kids and \$12 for adults. They will return by 6:30 to the church. All parents and siblings are invited, and yes the children may wear their PJ’s. Please RSVP to Deb Carpenter at 980-3416.

► Please note - we will not publish a Visitor the last week of December (28-31) per our bulk mail permit.

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THE INSIGHTERS SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS

The Insighters Sunday school class will be discussing practical, scriptural, ways that we can prepare ourselves to be better witnesses for the Lord Jesus. If you’re looking for some lively discussion with "lovely" Christian folks, you just might want to be upstairs at 9:00 am on Sunday mornings. In addition, beginning in January the class will start three different four-month studies based on the results from the survey. The first team teacher will be George Dudley, who will explore practical applications of the scriptures to everyday life. The other team teachers are Jim Langley and Bud Flora. Come and invite a friend and start the new year with a commitment to be in Sunday school.

LIBRARY NEWS

We want to invite you to check out the new Religious Fiction books that are now in our library. Thanks to Julie Henderson, we now have two series by Terri Blackstock and Karen Kingsbury, that we know many of you will enjoy. Please come visit your library and check out a book!!

Happy reading, The Library Ladies

GRACE NOTES

- ✚ Anyone who participated in any way with our choir, hand bells, or music this past year is invited to the Choir Christmas Party at the Watts on Dec. 16 at 6:30 pm.
- ✚ If the Lord has blessed you with financial blessings this year, please consider sharing with the Lord. Contact Cece for a special end-of-the-year gift to the church.
- ✚ Our birthday wishes are expressed to Olivia Wurner, Julie Williamson, Mark Bosarge, Kayla Vaughn and Frances Gatewood, who were not on the birthday calendar for December. Please call the office if you feel that we don’t have your birthday.
- ✚ We express our sympathy to Norma Baker, who lost her son.
- ✚ Please remember our shut-ins at Christmas.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

We have two Christmas Eve worship services. The one at 7:00 pm will be a Contemporary Service with a baptism. The nursery will be open for this service. The service at 11:00 pm will be Traditional with the service in candlelight.

CHRISTMAS OUTREACH PROJECT

All the youth groups have joined together to help our adopted family. The Bible Buddies and the Kool Kids will be making Christmas ornaments and the CYF have purchased gifts for each of the children. If you would like to help with this project, please bring any household item to the church or see Sharon or Liz Orazine.