

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Montgomery, Alabama exists to demonstrate and proclaim God's joyful, unconditional love and to provide an inclusive environment of spiritual growth and nurturing for God's children.

## Christian families

On day two of my first full day in the office, Alice and I carpooled to the Auburn University-Montgomery campus nearby. The visit's purpose was participation in a research project. Several months ago, two AUM professors- one Religious Studies, one Sociology- contacted the church with a request for help. They'd received a grant to study the various forms of Family Ministry that Protestant churches in our region were doing. We're such a church. Could they interview the pastor?

We responded, "Well, yes. But he still lives in Minnesota. Can y'all wait?" They did, until last week when we finally connected. It was, I must say, a cool conversation.

Unsurprisingly, it lasted longer than expected. Make the mistake of giving a preacher carte blanche to talk about God and church, and your 9am meeting will threaten lunch. That said, they're researchers wanting lots of data, so they let me ramble on. Which I was glad to do. Because they asked *awesome* questions!

For instance, one was, "What is the ideal Christian family?" I said, "That's a loaded question." They smiled, knowingly. So I began with the critical caveat that, as a Disciples of Christ pastor, I believe that I don't speak for my church. We all have freedom to interpret the Bible for ourselves, and the responsibility, therefore, to do so. So my understanding of "ideal Christian family" isn't the only one that matters at First Christian. Far from it!

Still, I hoped our church had *some* shared instincts about that question, ones that may distinguish us from other congregations they'll study. So I talked about values and the first-place importance of unconditional love. How scripture describes numerous types of families- all with foibles, dysfunctions and triumphs- and yet many finding ways to promote the holiness and grand purpose of God. Think of philandering Judah, bigamous David, dogmatically-bachelor Paul, Ruth and Naomi's utter devotion transcending blood-ties or ethnic barriers. God's imagination, I suggested, has vast room for various possibilities of "ideal family." And that's great, since we're often living in less-than-ideal situations, putting God's flexibility to the test.

In other words, I wanted them to know that FCC doesn't teach a Christianity whose family litmus test is whether you've been divorced, or the parents' gender identities, or the perfect put-togetherness of kids. We celebrate, instead, values, those of love and inclusivity, commitment and community service, and hope to instill them in our families and children.

Which gets at other questions they asked. "What are you doing to help nurture ideal Christian families?" "What would you like to do that you aren't doing?" "How do you know if your work is working for your families?" That gave Alice and me a chance to tell our church's unique and wonderful story, describe our hopes and dreams, own up to our challenges and limitations. I hope the professors will forgive us for sounding like we were salespeople (Alice did invite the one who lives locally to join us for worship...!). But it was clear that we believed FCC, whatever our imperfections, has a valuable gift to offer Montgomery families.

And, we said, we've only just begun! I mean, that's not entirely true. We've offered a profound Disciples witness for over a century and that legacy of longevity is spectacular. Rather, we suggested we felt like we're on the cusp of a brilliant new chapter- hopeful of investing more in enhanced family ministry, convinced that people are increasingly looking for a church like ours in which to raise 21<sup>st</sup> century Christian kids, exploring ways to enhance volunteer opportunities and our facilities (Butt House Youth Center?!?! ) to support fun, meaningful family activities.

Thus the conversation went. I assume our pride about being involved with FCC was evident, as I hope it is with any of us when given the chance to talk about our church! And the point of sharing it with you is simply to ask that you share in our excitement about the possibilities, the distinctiveness, the gift and trajectory of family ministry in our lovely church. I hope you'll get further involved.

Grace and Peace,  
Shane

## Music Notes



One of my earliest memories of church is of my grandpa, Ernest C. Savage, winking and smiling at me from his seat in the church choir on Sunday mornings. The memory of that wink accompanied by his enormous smile and surrounded by music—a Sunday ritual—is one of the dearest memories I hold of a wonderful and caring man. Sometimes the only thing I looked forward to in church was that simple, loving gesture.

Pawpaw's presence in my life was constant until his death from cancer when I was 13 and he was 69. If I'm not careful, memories of his death can haunt me. I have to push past those and remember his life. Pawpaw was jolly, giving, caring, resolute, hard-working, warm, patient, kind.

Ernie really was the embodiment of a wink and a smile and a song. An act and a persona all in one. A wink and smile and song connected love from grandpa to granddaughter; music from a baritone to a budding alto; ritual to a little girl who longed for the presence of a loving father-figure. From that every-Sunday act of love, my grandpa demonstrated commitment, faith, and service to church and to family, and he said, "I love you" all the way from his seat at the back of the choir behind the pulpit to where I sat in a balcony pew.

Harry Connick Jr. sang "A Wink and a Smile" in one of my all-time-favorite movies, *Sleepless in Seattle*. Here's an excerpt:

"Give me a wink and a smile  
We go together like a wink and a smile

Now my heart is music, such a simple song  
Sing it again the notes never end  
This is where I belong

Just the sound of your voice  
The light in your eyes  
We're so far away from yesterday  
Together, with a wink and a smile"

Here's to music, love, and grandpas in this  
Father's Day month.

**Su Ofé**  
**Director of Music**



### "10 Scriptures Every Christian Should Know"

Please join us for a combined adult Sunday School class for the summer. Pastor Shane Isner will be teaching the combined class using the ten scriptures that he will be preaching from for those ten weeks. The scripture for each 9:00 Sunday School lesson is the scripture to be used for the 10:00 worship service message.

#### **They are listed below:**

- June 5- Genesis 1:1-6, 9, 14, 20, 24, 26-27, 31- The Creation
- June 12- Exodus 14:19-31- The Exodus
- June 19- Nehemiah 7:73b-8:3, 8:6, 8:8-1- Return from Exile
- June 26- Micah 6:1-8- God's Basic Requirements
- July 3- Galatians 5:1-6, 13-14- Real Freedom
- July 10- Matthew 25:31-46-The Least of These
- July 17- Luke 10:25-37- The Good Samaritan
- July 24- John 17:20-26- Prayer for Unity
- July 31- Luke 23:33-43- The Crucifixion
- August 7- Revelation 21:1-7- The End



### **Cave Quest VBS Adventure**

Hey Kids! Gear up for an underground adventure grounded in the rock-solid foundation of God's love!

Volunteers ... Let's dig deep, and shine God's love in the darkness by joining the "Cave Crew".

**The Dates are: Tuesday, July 26-29  
from 5:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m.**

Cave Crew volunteers needed: Teachers, food prep, music leader, & registrar. I will decorate the main areas and coordinate volunteers, but will need a chairperson who can be there nightly to make sure things go smoothly. Thanks to you ALL for being the "Light of the World"!

**VBS meeting on June 12th at 2:00 p.m.**

**Deb Batson**



**All Camps Begin & End at 10am**

**Genesis Camp— June 24th-26th, 2016**

(Friday-Sunday)

For those who have completed Kindergarten  
or 1st Grade

Cost: \$170.00

Location: YMCA Chandler

**Discovery Camp— June 24th-26th, 2016**

(Friday-Sunday)

For those who have completed 2nd or 3rd Grade

Cost: \$170.00

Location: YMCA Chandler

**Junior Camp— June 20th-24th, 2016**

(Monday-Friday)

For those who have completed 4th or 5th Grade

Cost: \$265.00

Location: YMCA Chandler

**CYF Conference— June 20th-24th, 2016**

(Monday-Friday)

For those who have completed 9th, 10th, 11th,  
or 12th Grade

Cost: \$280.00

Location: YMCA Chandler

**CYF Rho Camp— June 24th-28th, 2016**

(Friday– Tuesday)

For those who have completed 6th, 7th, or 8th Grade

Cost: \$280.00

Location: YMCA Chandler

**Beach Camp— June 10th-15th, 2016**

(Friday– Wednesday)

For Youth in Grades 6th-12th

Cost: \$310.00

Location: Dauphin Island

**If you plan on attending a camp please grab a  
registration form from the  
Information Board.**



***Habitat for Humanity  
Special Offering***

Montgomery Habitat for Humanity is part of a global, nonprofit housing organization operated on Christian principles that seeks to put God's love into action by building homes, communities, and hope. Typically, volunteers from Faith Build congregations will begin constructions efforts when they collectively reach a target goal of approximately \$70,000 designated for building materials for the home. Last year we donated \$1,000 for their 2015 project, and our goal for 2016 is \$1,500. We will collect an offering on June 12, 2016 to support Faith Build 2016 projects. Please mark this date on your calendar and support "Habitat" as we have done in prior years. Also, you can give your contribution any time prior to June 12, just remember to designate that it is for "Habitat." The actual building/repair of the home will probably start around June/July, and there will be many service opportunities for us who are available. Please contact Steve or Dixie if you have any questions.

**Dixie Robinson**

**Local Mission Team Leader**

**Steve Chun**

**Mission Division Chairperson**



***Disciples women***

Disciples Women will meet on **June 13th at 6pm** at the home of Ann Hubbert. Rev. Gerri Johnson will be leading our Bible study. Ann is providing the meal.

We will be discussing chapter 3, "Martha, the Disciplined" from our book Strong was her Faith. We always have a good time. Won't you come join us?

Sign up on the church info board.

**Bobbie Morris, Disciples Women**





RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

*Installation Service for Rev. Shane Isner*

