

Connections

First Church Newsletter



518 North 19th Street
Birmingham AL 35203

www.firstchurchbhm.com

an OPEN place for ALL to **WORSHIP, GROW, and SERVE**

New Beginnings: A New Year

A new year brings thoughts of resolutions and a new start. As the calendar rolls over to a new year, we are caught between remembering and envisioning. We reflect upon what happened in the year we are leaving, and we visualize what we expect in the year ahead. For many, the New Year is a time of new hope – a portal to a change in our kismet. For others, the New Year is a reason to celebrate the completion of goals and tasks in the year that is finished, and the beginning of a new stage of the journey that lies ahead. We all stand at the pinnacle of 2009 and look into the land of 2010, wondering what the journey ahead holds for us.

What do we expect to be different in 2010? Are we willing to commit to the change we want to see through walking a different path? Einstein's definition of insanity is "doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." We must change for there to be change.

Within the church, January means Epiphany; a time of the revelation of God in human form. During this time, Western Christians celebrate the visit of the "Kings from the east," while Eastern Christians commemorate Jesus' baptism. If the historical calendar is correct, the kings began their journey before Christ's arrival. The Magi left in search of the miraculous and were not disappointed.

Perhaps the Magi have something to teach us in our approach to the year ahead. What are we seeking in the New Year? What are our expectations? Do we believe we will encounter the Savior in our journeys?

Grace and Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith".





MEMBERS in MINISTRY

Please join your church family for the Ministry Fair on Sunday, January 31, 2010 in the Loft area during the Sunday School hour. Beginning at 9:30am, we will celebrate and promote the ministries that are

actively going on at First Church as well as the ministry partnerships we have with outside organizations (listed below). There will be tables set up with information about each of the ministries, a short video presentation around 10:15am, and a greeting from Pastor Keith Thompson. Refreshments will be provided by various Sunday School classes. The Ministry Fair is a great opportunity to connect and become informed about the different ministries that are a vital part of First Church's mission. What a great way to kick-off the new year!

First Church Ministries

Child Development Center
City Kids
Collision Student Ministries
Contemporary Worship
Director of Music
Evangelism
Intergenerational Ministries
Outreach Ministries
United Methodist Women

Partners in Ministry

Church of the Reconciler
Dream Garden
Firehouse Shelter
First Light
Greater Birmingham Ministries
Kairos
Southwest Community Centers
Urban Ministries
Others

ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD Retreat

On January 23rd, the members of the Administrative Board at First Church will participate in a retreat led by Dr. Stewart Jackson. Stewart will lead us in explorations of what it means to be a Healthy Congregation, expectations of each board member, and our goals for the year to come. This retreat is for everyone who is a member of the Administrative Board and promises to be a worthwhile experience for all who attend. The retreat will be at the church. Please mark your calendar and make every effort to attend.



An Angel Among Us

During Advent, the Beginnings congregation watched with anticipation each week as an angel began to appear in the Chapel. On the first Sunday of Advent, amid a beautiful blue mosaic, there was only the outline of an angel. And then, with each week, more and more of the angel's color, beauty and detail were made visible. Now, she adorns St. John's Chapel with an air of tranquility and eloquence.

We offer a very special thank you to K.C. Hayes for sharing her gift of time and talent. Each week during Advent, K.C. worked many hours creating this painting on the Chapel wall. What a wonderful Christmas gift she has given the congregation!

You are always invited to worship in this space or just stop in any day of the week and see this lovely addition to the Chapel. Perhaps as you sit in the stillness and the quiet, you will hear her speak, "Fear not. The Lord is with you!"

Adult Small Groups

NEW CLASSES BEGINNING

JANUARY 10 AT 6:15

We are offering four very different classes on Sunday evenings beginning January 10. To sign up for a class or to learn more about any of the classes please email or call Nancy Hornsby (nancy@firstchurchbhm.com or 254-3186).

Healthcare Reform (A Small Group for Discussion and Action)

Five Weeks—January 10, 17, 24, 31 and February 14

Facilitator: Interns from the David Mathews Center for Civic Life

We have the privilege of being led in a five-week group process with members from other downtown churches to learn how better to engage one another in meaningful and constructive conversation.

The David Mathews Center for Civic Life is a non-profit organization which works with communities to enhance discussion around difficult issues. The organization will offer a pilot group of 15-20 members of Methodist congregations in the downtown Birmingham area an opportunity to engage in a different way of discussing the healthcare reform challenges facing our nation.

Space will be limited to 20 participants.

Yoga

On-going beginning January 10

Facilitator: Participants share responsibilities

Whether you are a beginner or well-seasoned in the practice of yoga, you will benefit from this weekly class. This Yoga class incorporates stretching and deep breathing with prayer and centering our minds and hearts on God. Leadership varies with participants and occasional guest yoga instructors.

Receiving the Day: Christian Practices for Opening the Gift of Time.

Eight weeks beginning January 10-31, February 14-March 7

Facilitator: Rev. Nancy Hornsby

This class will explore together Dorothy Bass' book: Receiving the Day: Christian Practices for Opening the Gift of Time. Many of us will make New Year's resolutions to make better use of our time. This study will explore an alternative to the rhetoric of management and mastery...Receiving the Day offers a language of attention, poetry, and celebration. Bass encourages us to reevaluate our understanding of the temporal and thereby to participate fully in the Christian practice of knowing time as God's gift.

Living Your Strengths

Five Weeks—January 10, 17, 24, 31 and February 14

Facilitator: Keith Thompson

Living Your Strengths class helps us learn more about ourselves and how to embrace our God-given talents and strengths. It also helps us accept and appreciate the talents and strengths of others. All participants take an online survey and discover their five top strength themes. We then are led and guided to use our strengths to be all that God has created us to be. We are encouraging everyone at First Church to take the Living Your Strengths class so we can build the best church possible by using the strengths God has given each of us.

WEEKDAY CLASSES

Living Your Strengths

TBD

Nancy Hornsby will be leading this three week class to learn more about your strengths and the strengths of others in the congregation. We will explore how knowing and embracing our God-given talents can help us in becoming not only the persons God has called each of us to be, but also to be a stronger, healthier church.

Contact: Nancy Hornsby

Wisdom Circle

Tuesdays from 12:00-1:00 beginning January 12.

Facilitator: Rev. Nancy Hornsby

A Wisdom Circle is a gathering of women who desire to share life's journey with one another. Our first date to meet in the New Year will be January 12.

Contact: Nancy Hornsby

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Wednesdays at 5:00 in members' home

Knitters and those interested in learning to knit are encouraged to come join this small group. Shawls and blankets are made and blessed with prayers to be given to people at a particular time of need or special event in their lives. Mia Cather and Ann Gasque offer their skills to teach the art of knitting so no experience is required.

Men's Prayer Breakfast

Friday mornings @ 6:45 Alabama Power Company Cafeteria

All men are encouraged to join this group for breakfast and prayer. Each week, a different member of the group presents a brief devotional. This is followed by a time of prayer. This is a great way to get to know other men of the church and to grow in your faith. The gathering ends by 7:30. For more information, contact Jim Chalker or Ted Cramer.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January

January - 10th

6:00 - Collision Kick-Off

January - 23rd

Ad Board Retreat (On Campus)

January - 15th-18th

Youth Ski Trip

January - 31st

9:30 - Ministry Fair

GIFTS RECEIVED BY THE CHURCH

To the Memorial Fund

In Memory of Evelyn Relfe

from Jim Hard

from Sara Clark

from Jim Chalker

from Virginia J. Smith

from Margaret Griffin

from First Church Garden Club

from Berenice and Lavelle Dendy

In Memory of Mary Lesta Cosby

from The Cosby Family

In Memory of A.L. Benefield Jr.

from Marnie and Jim Brown

To the Choir Fund

In Memory of Virginia Cook

from Malinda Hayes

To the Radio Fund

In Honor of Dorothy M. Perry

from Virginia McLean

To the Church Fund

In Honor of Virginia McLean

from Dorothy Perry

To the Endowment Fund

In Honor of Johnie Cordell

from Lyn and Ray Grant



ANNOUNCEMENTS

CITY KIDS' BOOK STUDY - "LISTEN TO THE WIND"

The Elementary Children will be discussing the children's book, "Listen To The Wind," in January. Brian Murphy will share this exciting children's version of "Three Cups of Tea."

The book tells a remarkable story of how Greg Mortenson kept his promise to a Himalayan village to return and build a school for them. It is told in the voice of the Korphe's children and shares a wonderful example of how one person can change thousands of lives.

PRAYER MINISTRY

Our ministers have asked me to lead efforts to further our church's prayer ministry. My hope is that we will be able to develop a more vibrant and personal prayer ministry in 2010, but I need your help. Please contact me if a) you have an idea as to how we might build on our present prayer ministry, b) you know of persons who would be an asset to this ministry and/or c) prayer is a passion of yours and you want to be a part of the design process and result. With God's help, prayer will continue to transform our church.

Thank you, Hanna Schock ph. 824-9992, hannaschock@bellsouth.net

GARDEN CLUB

The Garden Club will meet on January 20th at 12:00 noon in the Dining Room. Please join us for friendship and fun. For reservations please call Peggy West at 785-7674 by the Friday before the meeting.

COLLISION STUDENT MINISTRIES: UP-COMING DATES & ACTIVITIES

Ski Trip, January 15th – 18th - Collision Student Ministries will be taking our annual Ski Trip to Maggie Valley, North Carolina this January. Please keep students and chaperones in your thoughts and prayers as we all will be enjoying fun and fellowship on the slopes at Wolf Ridge. Please make final payments for this trip by January 10th.

Discovery Weekend, February 12th-14th – This February will mark First Church's second Discovery Weekend. Last year was a huge success with over 70 students participating and over 100 volunteers helping out in some capacity. This year's event will be even bigger, and we will need even more help. Please be ready to say "yes" to be a part of Discovery this year at First Church Birmingham.



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Senior Pastor
Keith Thompson

Pastor
Nancy Hornsby

Pastor
Griff Pemberton

Youth Director
Jonathan Goss

Children's Director
Linda Underwood

If you have something you would like to put in the newsletter or any questions or comments please email: Info@firstchurchbhm.com



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Sunday Schedule

8:45 - Beginnings Service (Service of Word & Table)
(ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL)

9:30 - Sunday School

11:00 - The Loft (Modern Worship)

11:00 - Sanctuary (Traditional Worship)

5:30 - Dinner

6:00 - City Kids & Collision (Youth)

6:15 - Adult Groups