

The Good News

First Christian Church
Anniston, AL

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⊕ “Unbinding Your Heart” Is Here! ♥

Are you ready to be set free? As we begin Lent, FCC is embarking on a new adventure, “Unbinding Your Heart,” a congregation-wide, small group prayer and faith-sharing experience. The focus of UBH is deepening our relationship with Christ by learning how to share it with others. The book includes a daily prayer journal that we will all begin on March 2nd. ⊕ ♥

Four small groups will be meeting once a week to discuss our prayer lives and the chapters of the UBH book. Suzy Spiceland will lead a group at church on Sundays at 9:30. Marie Bittle will lead a group at the Roszells’ home in Jacksonville on Mondays at 6:00 pm. Rebecca Littlejohn will lead a group at church on Tuesday evenings at 6:30. And Anne Phillips will lead a group at church on Wednesdays at 9:00 am. ⊕ ♥

The sermons throughout Lent will also connect with the themes of the book, while drawing in those who are unable to participate in the small groups. Our children will have a special part to play, as they learn a new word each week that teaches us something about how to open our hearts to God. ⊕ ♥

If you have not yet made the commitment to participate, it’s not too late! There are a few extra books around, and there is room for you in almost any of our small groups. If you can’t do that, you can at least commit to daily prayer throughout the Lenten Season. Let’s see what God can do! ⊕ ♥

Sun., Mar. 1 ~ “Unbinding Your Heart” starts! ~ 9:30 am ⊕ ♥

March 8-15 ~ Week of Compassion Ω !!

Sat., Mar. 21 ~ Spring Picnic ~ 11:00-3:00 ⊕ ♥ !!

Sat., Mar. 28 ~ All-Church Work Day ~ 9:00 am ♥

WEEK of COMPASSION Ω

Ω March 8-15 at FCC Ω

FCC will be celebrating Week of Compassion, Sunday to Sunday, March 8-15. Week of Compassion is our denominational disaster relief and development fund. We will receive an offering both Sundays to support their important ministry around the world. Ω

Guest Preacher Ω

On Sunday, March 8th, we will welcome Rev. Beth Thomason to our worship service to provide the morning message. Beth has participated in numerous Week of Compassion work trips, and she will share these experiences with us as she opens the gospel to us. Ω !!

Hygiene Kit Assembly Ω

We will be assembling Hygiene Kits for Week of Compassion as well this year. These kits are provided to disaster victims and refugees to help them keep clean and healthy. You are asked to donate some of the items needed for the kits. There is a donation sign-up in the Friendship Room. Our goal is to build 18 kits. We will be assembling them after church on Sunday, March 15th, so be sure to bring your items in by then. See the back of the calendar (insert) for more information, including a list of what is needed. Ω !!

Spring Picnic! ♥

You are invited (along with your friends, family, neighbors and co-workers!) to join us for a **Spring Picnic at Oxford Lake on Saturday, March 21st from 11:00-3:00**. We will be hanging out at Pavilion #7 (and the water's edge and the playground, etc.). A sign-up sheet for food is now out in the Friendship Room. Make plans to join us! Please bring lawn chairs and any outdoor games you like to play. ♥ !!

⊕ Young Adult Lunch Ω

All Young Adults are invited to join Pastor Rebecca and Rev. Beth Thomason for lunch at **Mellow Mushroom** after worship on Sunday, **March 8th** to hear more about how FCC could plan a mission work trip to the Gulf Coast. Ω !!

Special Music This Month ⊕

Our "Unbinding Your Heart" focus for Lent has a theme song: "Lord, I Want to Be a Christian." Since we will be singing it every week, we will be trying it with a few twists. On Sunday, March 22nd, we will welcome Carlos and Erick Martinez and Ana Rivera from Iglésia to provide music for our worship service. They will offer a few songs in Spanish, but also lead us in our theme song. ⊕ !!

From the Pastor's Pen...

Beloved Church,

The signs of the times are not pretty. National chain stores are closing, more job cuts are announced every day, and retirement incomes have plummeted. How can we stay grounded in our faith in the face of such uncertainty?

One way to remain focused on God's providence is to make a discipline of giving thanks. Gratitude may seem like a feeling that comes and goes, but we can choose to be thankful simply by counting our blessings. The act of doing so tends to bring true feelings of gratitude to life. So let me give thanks!

First of all, thanks for all you do to make First Christian Church such a wonderful place to be in ministry! Thanks for the generous Christmas bonus you shared with me and the staff.

I give thanks to God for the beautiful Christmas season we shared and the exciting activities we have coming up. I give thanks for the chance we will all have to renew and deepen our faith through the "Unbinding Your Heart" experience. I give thanks for the journey toward Easter that will begin at the end of this month.

And though things may be tight, I give thanks that I have a home, food to eat, and friends to celebrate with!

Peace and grace,

Pastor Rebecca

p.s. See you in church!

Service Schedules ♥

February Meetings ♥

Elders – Sun., Feb. 1, 12:30

Partnership – Sun., Feb. 15, 12:30

Council – Sun., Feb. 22, 12:30

Elders ♥:

Feb. 1: Marie Bittle

Feb. 8: Mary Elizabeth Johnson

Feb. 15: Anne Phillips

Feb. 22: Judy Bell

Communion Set-Up/Service ♥:

Arlan Roszell & Colin Green

Fellowship Hosts ♥:

Feb. 1: Eva McCullough

Feb. 8: Suzy Spiceland

Feb. 15: Karen & J.R. Reaves

Feb. 22: Laura & Shelley Phillips

Liturgists / Kids Message ♥:

Feb. 1: Dick Bell / Rebecca L.

Feb. 8: Janie Morrow / Judy B.

Feb. 15: Colin Green / Rebecca L.

Feb. 22: Bill Rowland / Suzy S.

Floater / Pre-School / CC ♥:

Feb. 1: Joanne W. / Janna S. / Karen R.

Feb. 8: Deane A. / Suzy S. / Marie B.

Feb. 15: Karen R. / Janie M. / Lori H.

Feb. 22: MaryLib J. / Anne P. / Laura P.

One + One + One Key

⊕ = You ♥ = Church Ω = World

!! = Bring a friend!

Disciples Women ⊕

CWF/Disciples Women will meet on Sunday, March 15th in conjunction with our Week of Compassion Hygiene Kit Assembly session. The women will provide Fellowship that day. We will conclude with a blessing of the kits. Ω ⊕ !!

Like to Drive? Like People?

The Meals on Wheels program run by Interfaith Ministries is in sore need of some **new volunteers**. Some long-time drivers have had to retire, and new routes are needed. Ω

Meals on Wheels delivers a hot lunch to people who cannot fix meals themselves, Monday through Friday. This makes it possible for many elderly people to stay in their own homes, when they would otherwise have to move into a nursing facility. Driving for MoW takes about an hour of your week, from 11:15-12:15. You can try it out by volunteering as a substitute driver. See Rebecca if you're interested. Ω

Pastor Consulting in Atlanta

Pastor Rebecca will be in Atlanta March 6-7, consulting with the Fund for Theological Education for their Ministry Fellows program, which supports seminarians doing special summer projects.

NOVELS GROUP ⊕

The Novels Group will be meeting **Monday, March 9th** at 1:00 pm to discuss "**The Secret Life of Bees**" by Sue Monk Kidd. Anne Phillips leads this group. Everyone who has read the book is welcome to join the conversation. Come and bring a friend! ⊕ !!

"Praying the Psalms" is on break until "Unbinding Your Heart" concludes in April. ⊕

Bible Study on Acts ⊕

Everyone junior-high-on-up is welcome to join our Sunday Morning Study in our Bible study of the Book of Acts. You can pick up copies of the overview and the class outline from Pastor Rebecca. Acts is full of incredible stories and interesting journeys. ⊕

SMS meets every Sunday at 9:30 am in the Fellowship Hall. ⊕

Pause for Prayer ⊕

Pause for Prayer, our weekly contemplative prayer service, is a great way to get in touch with God during Lent. Come join us for some holy quiet time each Wednesday at 5:00 pm. ⊕

125th Anniversary Planning Committee Forming ♥

Moderator Marie Bittle has begun naming a 125th Anniversary Planning Committee. This group will begin meeting after Easter. They will start by brainstorming possible ways we can celebrate this important milestone in our church's history. We are still looking for people to participate, especially some who might be here for the 150th! If you would like to help plan, contact Marie. ♥

Children's Ministries and Deacons Meeting ♥

The Spiritual Formation Coordinating Team requests that all Children's Ministries Volunteers (Floaters, Pre-School Leaders, Children's Church Teachers) and Deacons attend a brief, stand-up meeting during Fellowship Time on Sunday, March 8th. We need to update everyone about some adjustments in the way these programs will work. We are also looking for new volunteers to serve, especially as floaters. This position is basically assisting the Children's Church leader. ♥

All-Church Work Day ~ Saturday, March 28th

The Stewardship Coordinating Team invites everyone to come help clean up, repair and generally spiff things up around the church before Easter, at an All-Church Work Day, Saturday, March 28th, beginning at 9:00 am. There are always jobs for workers small and large, strong and weak, so bring yourself, your cleaning supplies and tools, and come pitch in! ♥

Sharing about Stewardship ~ Wishing Away a Windy Winter

You may have noticed that the wind has been blowing plenty strong lately, but did you look up? If you looked up when arriving at church, you might have noticed that our steeple has lost siding to the recent high winds. Robert Soleman and Arlan Roszell have worked out a plan to repair both sides of the steeple (front & south). Because of the different angles and access, it will be done in two different jobs. If you would like to make a donation to help cover the costs of this repair, please note "Steeple Repair" on the memo line of your check. It will cost approximately \$800 for both repair jobs. Thank You! ♥

Church in Covenant Opportunities and News

Early Registration Discount for General Assembly Extended !!!

It's time to start thinking about summer! (The pollen is here already, after all!) And summer in 2009 means **General Assembly!** If you've never been, it's hard to describe what you're missing – It's **worship** with thousands of brother and sister **Disciples** from across the continent and the world. It's workshops on all sorts of things that can **deepen your faith life**, help you start a new program here at FCC, or teach you about an **important global issue**. It's exposure to some **great preaching**, some incredible ministries of our church, **wonderful music**, and great people who are **friends you just haven't met yet**. ☺

General Assembly is in Indianapolis this year, which is only 8 hours away, despite being on the other side of the Mason-Dixon line. It runs from Wednesday evening, **July 29th through Sunday, August 2nd**. The early registration discount has been extended through the end of March, so now is the time to decide to go. Our congregation has not yet named any delegates – You could be the first! ♥

The organizers are hoping to get **2,009 youth** in attendance this year, and there are great activities planned for youth and younger children. There are mission projects open to all ages, before and during the Assembly. You can get more information in the office or online at www.disciples.org. Pray seriously about attending. Even if you can't go, **please be in prayer for this event**, all those planning it, and all those who will attend. ☺ ♥

Regional Prayer Calendar

In 2009, we will continue to send cards with our prayer blessings to our partner churches in the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region. This year, we are inviting Iglésia to join us in signing the cards. The Prayer Calendar for March is:

Mar. 1: Fairhope Christian Church, Fairhope, AL – John Alford, interim

Mar. 8: First Christian Church, Decatur, AL – Cameron Douglas & Carol Hallman

Mar. 15: Iglésia Cristiana, Anniston – José Matos, Ana Rivera & Carmen Reyes

Mar. 22: First Christian Church, Lanett, AL – Howard Merchant

Hayneville Christian Church, Hayneville, AL – Mrs. R.V. Harrell, board chair

Mar. 29: Snow Hill Christian Church, Ft. Deposit, AL – Dale Braxton

Harrison Street Christian Church, Greenville, AL – Timothy O'Neal