

The Good News

First Christian Church
Anniston, AL

www.fccanniston.org

256-236-1316

March 2011
email: fccanniston@bellsouth.net

⊕ Lent – A Vital Piece of the Peace of Christ ⊕

Every Sunday as we begin worship, we offer the Peace of Christ to one another. This act is more than a greeting; it is a symbol of the reconciliation that Jesus teaches us is necessary preparation for worshipping God. (Mt. 5:23-24) The season of Lent is sort of an extended version of passing the Peace; it is a time when we consider humbly and prayerfully what might be keeping us distant from God. It is a time when we confess those sins, repent, seek forgiveness and ask God's help to keep from continuing in error. Such a time of preparation makes it more meaningful to celebrate the life-giving power of the Risen Christ whom we will welcome on Easter morning. ⊕

The season of Lent begins at FCC with our **Ash Wednesday Service on March 9th at 6:00**. Everyone is welcome. There will be a special time for kids, and child care will be provided. Rather than Pause for Prayer, the hour beforehand will be set up for self-directed meditation and prayer. ⊕

See more about Lenten activities on page 2 of this newsletter. It is our hope that each of us will take the opportunities of Lent seriously. Perhaps you want to give something up. Perhaps you want to add a spiritual discipline or service activity into your life. Consider attending Pause for Prayer. Participate in Faith Chat. Donate to our Mission Adventure drives and come for the field trips. Join our Sunday morning Bible study. Easter is coming – Let's get ready! ⊕

Wed., Mar. 9 ~ Ash Wednesday Service, 6:00 pm ⊕ !!

Sun., Mar. 13 ~ Faith Chat begins (see page 2) ⊕ ♥

Mar 18-20 ~ Children's Worship & Wonder Training (see p. 5) ⊕ ♥

Sat., Mar. 26 ~ Mission Adventure to Sable Center (see page 2) Ω !!

Lenten Sermon Series ⊕

Throughout the season of Lent, Pastor Rebecca will be presenting a series of sermons focused on Jesus Christ and his meaning for our lives. This series, called “**Jesus: the Way, the Truth, and the Life**”, will provide a special chance to consider your own beliefs about Jesus and what he means to you. ⊕

This may be a time when you would like to bring a friend who is not sure what to make of Jesus. The weeks leading up to Easter are a time when people are naturally thinking about their faith already. ⊕ !!

Join Us for FAITH CHAT ⊕

Building on the momentum from our “Talking Faith” program, we are launching a new opportunity for deepening your faith. Each Sunday after fellowship, you are invited to the Fellowship Hall for Faith Chat. ⊕

Lasting about 30 minutes, Faith Chat will give you a chance to discuss your beliefs, questions and convictions with fellow Christians. During Lent, Faith Chat will be a time to respond to the issues raised by Pastor Rebecca’s sermon series on Jesus. It may continue as a sermon response forum, or the topics may change as the group decides. Don’t miss it! ⊕ !!

Mission Adventures! Ω

2010 was a year of hard work focused on improving our facilities. Now it’s time to get busy sharing what we’ve learned about God’s power to multiply our faithful efforts! Ω

The Mission Coordinating Team is going to be guiding us on a journey to discover what service role God is calling our congregation to fill in our community. During Lent and the ensuing months, we will be invited to participate in Mission Adventures, in collaboration with our Pass the Salt agencies. Ω

Throughout March, we are holding a book drive. Books for grades K-6 are especially helpful. We will then deliver these books to the Sable Center in Hobson City and get a tour on Saturday, March 26th. (Books for older kids will be sent to the Youth Detention Center.) (The Sable Center is part of the ministry of Community Enabler-Developer, our March Pass the Salt ministry.) Ω

In April, we will be having a sunscreen and bug spray drive for Habitat for Humanity. We hope this will culminate in a work day on a Habitat house, late in the month. Ω

In each of these months, we will welcome guests from the agencies in worship to share with us what they are up to and how we can help. Ω

From the Pastor's Pen...

Beloved Church,

Have you noticed what's happening? I am so excited by the spiritual growth that has been taking place at FCC the last few months! People are getting serious about their relationship with Jesus and committing the time and effort it takes to deepen their faith. The results are beautiful to behold.

I am praying that this great momentum will not be lost as we move into the season of Lent. There are so many opportunities for us to engage with God's Living Spirit here at FCC. If you haven't gotten involved yet, now is the time. How will you choose to participate? How are you going to prepare your heart to welcome the Risen Christ on Easter Morning? Let's keep growing, together, in God's grace!

Grace and peace,

Pastor Rebecca

P.S. See you in church!

Pastor Rebecca will be in Tuscaloosa overnight, Mar. 4-5, for a planning meeting and a leadership workshop. She will also be on vacation, visiting her sister's family in Boston, Monday-Friday, March 21-25.

Service Schedules ♥

March Meetings ♥

Fellowship – Tue., Mar. 1, 5:30
Partnership – Wed., Mar. 2, 6:00
Stewardship – Tue., Mar. 8, 4:30
Mission – Sat., Mar. 12, 12:15
Spirit. Form. – Wed., Mar. 16, 6:00
Elders – Wed., Mar. 30, 6:00

Elders ♥:

Mar. 6: Maria Zamarripa
Mar. 13: Suzy Spiceland
Mar. 20: Robert Soleman
Mar. 27: Marie Bittle

Communion Set-Up/Service ♥:

Colin & Nancy Green

Fellowship Hosts ♥:

Mar. 6: Marie Bittle
Mar. 13: Nancy & Colin Green
Mar. 20:
Mar. 27: Lori Hays

Liturgists / Kids Message ♥:

Mar. 6: Janie Morrow / Rebecca
Mar. 13: Robert Soleman / Lori Hays
Mar. 20: Judy Bell / Rebecca
Mar. 27: Mary Lib Johnson /

Pre-School / CC / Floater ♥:

Mar. 6:: Anne P. / Suzy S. / Julie N.
Mar. 13:: Lori H. / Jen S. / Trace S.
Mar. 20: Janna S. / Marie B. / Karen R.
Mar. 27: Janie M. / Dick B. / Nancy G.

One + One + One Key

⊕ = You ♥ = Church Ω = World
!! = Bring a friend!

Disciples Women ⊕

Disciples Women will meet Saturday, March 12th at the church at 10:30 am. Lori Hays will be coordinating brunch. The program will be presented by Dr. Tina Deshotels, a sociology professor at JSU. She will be sharing the V-Day Spotlight Campaign on the Women and Girls of Haiti with us. All women are invited to attend this special Disciples Women's gathering. ⊕

Spring Picnic ~ 4/9 ♥

Mark your calendars for Saturday, April 9th, when our church family will gather for a spring picnic at Oxford Lake. A sign-up sheet for food and drinks will be out later in March. ♥

Easter Season Flowers ♥

A sponsor is needed for the flower arrangement that will be displayed during the Easter season. The supplies for these displays cost around \$200. If you would like to purchase the display in memory or honor of someone, please let Pastor Rebecca know. A few people could pitch in together to cover these costs as well. Karen Reaves is donating her time to arrange the flowers. Thanks to her and our sponsors! ♥

Informal Worship 3/27 ⊕

On Sunday, March 27th, we will have our every-other-month Informal Worship service. This service has a totally different worship structure, with a Bible study discussion instead of a sermon. This month's service will be part of Pastor Rebecca's Lenten series on "Jesus: the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Don't miss it! ⊕

PAGE TURNERS ⊕

The Page Turners book group will be discussing "The Noticer" by Andy Andrews on Monday, March 7th at 1:00 pm. Anyone who has read the book is welcome to join the group. See Anne Phillips for more information. ⊕

New Copier Purchased

The Council recently made the decision to purchase a new copier for our church office. The old one was leaking developer badly, making the copies grungy and blackened on the edges, and parts are no longer available to fix it. The new copier is from ABS and will arrive soon. Thanks!

Common Daily Bible Readings
Study continues ~ Sundays @
9:45

Children Worship & Wonder Training ~ Mar. 18-20 ♥

First Christian Church will be hosting a training for Children Worship & Wonder, Friday through Sunday, March 18-20. Pre-registration is required for this training. Children Worship & Wonder is a high-quality program for faith development among children. It is based on sound research into child development and careful consideration of how to help children evolve into adults with an engaged approach to their faith. ♥

The training will be led by Jane Nettles of Union Christian Church in Tuskegee, assisted by Diana Hodges-Batzka of First Christian Church in Montgomery. The regular cost of the registration (by Mar. 4) is \$120. Because we are hosting, we are allowed to have five people trained for free, provided that 10 paid registrations are made. It is still possible that the training could be cancelled, if not enough people register. Please help us spread the word. ♥

We are hoping to start using the CWW model in April or May. Our current Children's Ministries rotations will be adjusted, with CWW storytellers, assistants and floaters. Special thanks to Robert Soleman, who is creating the numerous props required to do CWW! ♥

Sharing about Stewardship ~ Report on 2010 ♥

Our denomination, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) maintains an annual record called the Yearbook, that contains information about all the ministries of our church. Each year, our congregation has to prepare a report for this book. The report form asks about things like worship attendance, new members and Christian education participation. (It is because of these statistics that we know our average worship attendance has gone up by 30% in the last 5 years.) It also asks us to report what we are doing with our financial resources.

In 2010, First Christian Church raised \$108,579.00 for local operating receipts. We raised \$59,669.00 for local capital receipts and \$9,120.00 for total outreach, including Disciples Mission Fund. The capital receipts number is much higher than most years, because it includes Miracle Day funds. The outreach number is slightly lower than most years, most likely also due to Miracle Day fund-raising. In 2010, outreach equaled 8.4% of our operating receipts. In 2009, outreach equaled 9.2% of operating, and in 2008, it was 12.2%.

**Ω Ω "Pass the Salt" Recipient in March: Ω Ω
Community Enabler-Developer**

Church in Covenant Opportunities and News

Regional Men's Retreat at Hargis - Mar. 18-19 ⊕ ♥

All men are encouraged to attend the Regional Men's Retreat at Hargis Retreat Center in Chelsea on Friday & Saturday, March 18-19. This will be the March activity for our newly formed men's group. ⊕

The theme of the retreat is "Living Generously". The keynoter is Rev. Bruce Barkhauer, the Disciples Minister for Faith and Giving from Indianapolis. You can come as early as 2:00 on Friday for fellowship, fishing and hiking. The retreat begins at 6:00 that evening. It will be over around 2:30 Saturday afternoon. The registration fee is \$80.00. An offer has been made to cover someone's registration costs, so let Pastor Rebecca, Robert Soleman or Kenny Hays know if you could use that assistance. Registration forms are available on the Engaged Faith table at the back of the sanctuary. Talk to Robert and Kenny about car-pooling. ⊕

You won't want to miss this great opportunity for bonding with the men of our church, learning about your faith and spending some time in the beauty of nature! Register today! ⊕

General Assembly Early-Bird Deadline Approaching! ⊕ ♥

It's not too late to get the discounted prices for our church's General Assembly this July! The early-bird registration fees are good through the end of March. General Assembly is July 9-13 in Nashville, one of the closest locations we'll ever see. See Pastor Rebecca for more information or visit www.disciples.org/GeneralAssembly/tabid/59/Default.aspx to learn more.

Regional Prayer Calendar

In 2011, we will continue to send cards with our prayer blessings to our partner churches in the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region. Iglésia joins us in signing the cards. The Prayer Calendar for March is:

Mar. 6: Fairhope Christian Church, Fairhope, AL – Mike Barnes

Mar. 13: First Christian Church, Decatur, AL – Cameron Douglas

Mar. 20: Primera Iglésia Cristiana Hispana, Anniston, AL – Carmen Reyes

Mar. 27: Snow Hill Christian Church, Ft. Deposit, AL – Dale Braxton

Long-Term Calendar

Wed., Mar. 2 ~ Partnership Team meeting
Sun., Mar. 6 ~ Talking Faith concludes
Wed., Mar. 9 ~ Ash Wednesday, Lent Begins
Sun., Mar. 13 ~ Lenten Sermon Series & Faith Chat begin
Fri.-Sat., Mar. 18-19 ~ Regional Men's Retreat
Fri.-Sun., Mar. 18-20 ~ Children's Worship & Wonder Training
Sat., Apr. 9 ~ All Church Spring Picnic
Sun., Apr. 17 ~ Palm Sunday
Thu., Apr. 21 ~ Holy Thursday service
Sat., Apr. 23 ~ Deacons & Volunteers at church to prepare for Easter
Sun., Apr. 24 ~ Easter Sunday!
8:30 ~ Early Service in Community Prayer Garden
9:15 ~ Breakfast and First Egg Hunt
10:00 ~ Church Family hour
11:00 ~ Resurrection Day Worship
12:15 ~ Second Egg Hunt and Fellowship Time

Celebrating the Unity and Diversity of the Body of Christ!

First Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
1327 Leighton Ave.
Anniston, AL 36207

Visit us at www.fccanniston.org

Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Sunday Worship 11:00 a.m.