

# First Christian Visitor

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

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

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## **A Fond Farewell Letter to First Christian Church**

Despite my world travels, the deepest marrow of my bones still smells of magnolias in May. I'm still Southern. And so, as I have always done, let me begin by saying “thank you” to the congregation at First Christian Church. Your choice to allow us to be “overnight guests” made our tornado response work possible. During my brief stay at FCC, I received valuable nuggets of wisdom from many of you. People told me “Thank you”. People offered to do my laundry. People cooked us delicious meals. People asked my volunteers how they worked so long and so hard in such grueling heat. One lady recently said to me, “You are doing work that really matters.” Yes, we are. Regardless of the secular nature of our organization, I know that we are doing God's work in the world for the least of our brothers. I'm pleased to know that our service to the residents of Alabama is evident and pleasing to the people outside of All Hands. Also, over the weeks, many parishioners expressed the sentiment that they were having a direct impact in the tornado recovery efforts through our dirty leathered hands. You did. Please know that you did. Each of you who chose to stretch the church facility beyond its usual functionality had a direct hand in the 4,000 volunteer hours that we performed in the field while we lived here in your house. Together, we had all hands in action.

I do wish that each of you had gotten to know our volunteers in the way that I do. You've undoubtedly seen that they look ragged at the end of a long work day. They are covered in tattoos, scars, sweat, and blisters. They work very hard, play very hard, and take time to rejuvenate more often than they bathe. And yes, sometimes they forget to wear shirts in the kitchen. Many are young, green, and sometimes inadvertently irreverent. But they are a highly responsible and selfless group. They are caring, giving, and forgiving. The reason that I continue the exhausting task of disaster response management is that I have never in my whole life met a more dedicated, hard-working, socially just, rabid group of people. These young folks from almost every state in the nation have given up their summers to run with wheelbarrows in the Alabama summer to serve complete strangers. They spend eight hours a day in the direct sun demolishing homes, clearing debris from properties to the curb, and removing damaged trees from property. Yet every day, they leap out of their bunks into their boots at unholy hours of the morning because some intangible, unrelenting, maniacal madness runs through all of them. Recently, for organizational reasons common to disaster response work, I stood in front of them and asked them to pack everything for a sudden move. Their enthusiastic and positive reaction makes me proud and privileged to stand behind them as well. All they wanted was to continue their field work without interruption.

From the start, helping the under-served in Alabama is all that has ever concerned this band of

disaster cowboys. As a manager, I have other constant concerns and joys – one of which is to watch people grow. Usually I am a speaking of our volunteers as they transition from college students looking to find their way and meaning in the world into competent young adults capable of leading crews, managing an office, handling dangerous equipment, and liaising with the community. I've watched them grow as I've watched myself grow. I hope that, in the process of our stay, we have also contributed to First Christian Church's growing work of being stewards of Christ. Additionally, I hope that we have helped some people to grow their perceptions of the power of today's young adults.

The world-changers of my generation might look unusual and be less discerning in their mannerisms, but their ideas and motivations are fresh and exciting. They breathe new life and vitality into the places they go. I urge you to continue the mission outreach at First Christian Church. I urge you to keep your doors and your hearts open to what my generation has to offer. I understand that there are trade-offs to having such unusual guests. There are growing pains. However, obvious though it may seem, the single alternative to having open doors is having closed ones. Outreach brings partnerships. During the weeks that our thirty volunteers stayed in your church, we were all more than the sum of our parts.

With much haste, we've packed up our tools and gear and headed for North Dakota to help the people of Minot recover from a devastating flood. However, I hope we have left some budding seeds behind us at First Christian. Once again, let me end this letter with a sincere thank you for allowing us to stay. In particular, let me thank Charlotte Brammer and Marian Moon for their tireless efforts to make us feel at home and to liaise between us and the congregation. On behalf of All Hands Volunteers, as a show of our gratitude towards First Christian Church for granting us use of the facility, I have presented a modest donation to Charlotte. It is my hope that these funds will contribute to the continued outreach efforts. I also have hope that, if disaster should unfortunately befall the Birmingham area in the future, All Hands would be welcomed back to serve once again.

*Clare Charbonnet, All Hands Coordinator*

## **OUTREACH UPDATE**

I have heard many speak about a special spirit moving in our midst, and that spirit seems to be influencing our children as well. During VBS last week, Teanna Cason and Lora Anderson presented a sandwich bag containing money that they had raised for tornado relief. These two young girls had gathered books and gone door-to-door selling those books in order to raise money to help others. Surely “the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these”

(Matt. 19: 14, NIV).

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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, August 7

- 9:00 Sunday School
- 9:45-10:15 Fellowship Moment
- 10:15 Worship Service
- 10:30 Worship & Wonder
- 1:30 - 3:30 Rehearsals for Dinner Theatre

Monday, August 8

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

Tuesday, August 9

- 7:00 Finance Council Meeting

Wednesday, August 10

- 6:30 Choir Practice

Thursday, August 11

- 7:00 Advocates Bible Study

Saturday, August 13

- 10:00 – 2:00 Clergy-Women’s Luncheon  
At Regional Office

**GRACE NOTES**

- ✠ Please continue to pray for Carole Rudd; Marquita Sebastian; Baby Carly Chandler, Dustin and Amy Chandler, Aneda and Dronnie Chandler; Pat Deaton; Carole Dutt; Heather Vaughn; Rumsey Sutton; Mack and Linda Heaton; Carolyn Goodall and family.
- ✠ We welcome Bob and Linda Browning who come by transfer from Church of Christ. Their address is: 121 Southledge, Birmingham, AL 35242. Phone number: 408-1508.
- ✠ The Elders will not be meeting this month.
- ✠ Our All Hands volunteers donated \$500.00 as a gift to First Christian Church.



If you are grateful you have family and loved ones surrounding you, put something in your **Blessing Box**.

**CHRISTIAN COMRADES SUNDAY LESSON**

Sunday, August 7<sup>th</sup>

**“Paul’s Epistles to the Thessalonians”  
2 Thessalonians 2: 13-3:5**

**“THE DISCIPLES”**

Sunday, August 7<sup>th</sup>

**Walk in God’s Path  
Judges 13: 1-8, 24-25**

**SUNDAY’S ATTENDANCE**

**WORSHIP SERVICE           157**  
**SUNDAY SCHOOL             78**



**“AN NIGHT ON 42<sup>ND</sup> STREET”  
DINNER THEATRE**

Our Dinner Theatre is coming soon. There will be two evenings, August 26<sup>th</sup> and August 27<sup>th</sup>. Dinner will start at 6:30 pm and will be delicious! The show will start after dinner and you won’t want to miss it.

The American Theatre opened on 42<sup>nd</sup> Street as the first of many theatres that opened on that famed street which became known around the world as Broadway.

Our show celebrates the history and heritage of musical theater on 42<sup>nd</sup> Street from then to now. Come, join us and enjoy the music and atmosphere of 42<sup>nd</sup> street.

Tickets may be purchased from any cast member after August 1<sup>st</sup>. You may also call the church office with your name and phone number and a cast member will contact you.

Tickets are \$25.00 but children under 12 may bring a sack dinner and enjoy the show for free. During the meal the children will be with an adult in our child care center which will be in the Ann Gandy room. Parents may pick their children up after dinner if they wish to enjoy the show with them. Please let the person you are purchasing your ticket from know if you are participating in this option as your child will need a child ticket. Seating is limited, so please purchase your tickets early.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS  
SUNDAY, AUGUST 14**

On Sunday, August 14, we will recognize Rev. Carl Flock for his outstanding 60 years of ordination and Christian Ministry. Sunday, August 21, our CYF youth will share the morning worship of their life changing experiences from their “Journey in Faith” to the Holy Land this past June. Our CYF youth have also been invited to write their stories for **280 Living**. Sunday, August 28, Wanda Davis will share with us in morning worship her life changing experiences titled, “Fly like the Angels.” Come and invite a friend(s). Please make your reservation on the envelopes in the pews, so that we will know how many will be staying for lunch.