

Voice

A PUBLICATION OF VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH
(Disciples of Christ) Birmingham, Alabama



May , 2024

VOLUME 75, NUMBER 5

Valley Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
2600 Cherokee Place
Birmingham, Alabama
35216

205-879-0419

Email: office@vccbhm.org

Website: www.vccbhm.org

Office Hours: 7:30am-
12:30pm Monday, Tuesday
and Wednesday

Dates of Interest:

- April 26-28
Regional Assembly
Fairhope, AL
- May 4—Valley Work
Day
- May 5th & 12th—
Blankets of Love
- May 5—Food Pantry
Peanut Butter&Jelly
- May 7— ROJO bene-
fit GBM
- May 11—Ladies’
Spring Tea
- May 12—Mother’s
Day
- May 15— Men’s
Luncheon
- May 19—Pentecost
- May 19 & 26 Pente-
cost Special Offering
- May 20—Voice
Deadline
- May 22—AAA trip
to Tuscaloosa
- May 23—Disciples
Women meeting
- May 27—Memorial
Day—Office closed

A Word from Your Pastor

It is hard to believe but the first quarter of this year is already gone, and, in my mind, it has flown by. But now that the Lenten season and Easter are behind us, we might be able to catch our breath a bit and give attention to some ideas to help our church grow, spiritually, emotionally, and numerically.

But this is going to require some effort, sacrifice and a willingness to adapt as we seek God’s will and purpose for this body of believers.

There are three questions that will drive this process of determining the direction of Valley Christian Church. Who we are, why are we here and what do we do.

I believe a good starting point is to ask, “Why are we here?” What purpose do we have in being here at this particular time in this particular place? If we don’t know why we are here, we won’t be able to determine who we are or what we are to do. It all starts with “why.”

Being followers of Christ, we believe God has a purpose for everything including us, but it can be difficult at times to figure out what that purpose is. The simple answers are we are here to serve, to proclaim the good news, to invite others into a relationship with Christ all of which are true. But I think it goes deeper. God has a specific purpose in mind for us, maybe more than one, but there is a reason we are here. Is it to offer a food pantry, is it to set up a pet park, is it to ask our neighbors what needs they may be experiencing, is it to be a place others use for their ministries? Maybe offer grief counseling, ministries for divorced or single older adults or younger ones. The idea is, I truly believe God has a purpose for us, a mission that will not only benefit our community but give us an identity.

And speaking of identity, we proudly claim our affiliation as a Disciple of Christ congregation which provides for us a framework from which to build our own unique identity while allowing much freedom in determining our focus and direction. Instead of being just like all other DOC churches or for that matter any other church regardless of denomination or lack thereof, we have the ability to be ourselves, to chart our own course and to create our own core identity, the identity that makes us Valley Christian Church.

Which begs the question; When we talk to others who do we say we are, what is it about us that makes us unique, that tells people what we are about? I have heard it said by many churches, “We are friendly and welcoming; very important attributes and not to be taken lightly; but if other churches are saying the same thing, what makes us different in the way we are friendly or welcoming. What else do we add to that to create an environment that draws others in?

When I am speaking about identity, I am looking for what makes Valley Christian Church, Valley Christian Church, what is/are the thing(s) we point to that lead people to say, “Yes, that is Valley Christian Church.” This identity can be one that is focused on a defined type of ministry. Examples may be; Valley is the church that provides food for the homeless, or Valley is the church that serves people with pets, the pet church if you will, or Valley is the church that helps people with medical debt, or computer literacy, or shepherding program that goes beyond our own members. The idea here is to form an identity that when we speak of Valley, others know who we are and through that what we do which as we just witnessed comes out of our identity.

It is our identity that forms what we do. If our identity is one of providing food for the homeless, then everything we do is focused on fulfilling that identity and those things that don’t while still good ministries, need to take a back seat as we need to be all in on what we claim as our identity. This is so much more important because of our small size. We need to realize that we can’t be everything to everybody. There is a line in one of the scenes in the series M*A*S*H* where Charles states, “I do one thing and I do it well and then I move on.” This applies to us as well as I believe we need to find those things that fit our identity and then do them well, so well that they inform others of who we are, what we do and why we are here.

Continued on next page.....

Life in the Valley

Prayers, Joys and Concerns

- Please be in prayer for Phyllis Kirk (Embellishments Bell Choir leader and member of Grace Christian) who is recovering at home from cancer surgery. Her recovery will probably be rather lengthy so please keep her rehab uppermost in our prayers.
- Ted Stuckenschneider is recovering and needs our continued prayers.
- Please be in prayer for Marilyn Ireland throughout her treatments.
- Terry Nunnelly's niece, Sonja Baker is back in the hospital with some issues with her new liver. Doctors are treating her but she has a long road ahead of her.
- Margaret Cox's mother-in-law, Jean Cox is responding well to the cancer treatments, the cancer is shrinking and the mass in her abdomen is not growing and is not a danger so they will monitor.
- Georgia Flora's son is in the hospital with congestive heart failure.
- Prayers of joy for Jackie Ivey on her new car.
- Food Pantry Sunday will be May 5th and the need is for Peanut Butter & Jelly. However, you can bring your donations at any time during the month of May and the Outreach chairperson will take them to GBM for you.
- Be in Prayer for David Brasher. He is suffering from Endocarditis, a bacteria that is affecting his blood stream.
- Jan Watts needs your prayers for her continued recovery.
- Mike Mee's daughter, Sarah Mee has been diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis
- Friend of Ted Stuckenschneider, Wilson Densmore undergoing several back surgeries. Please keep him in your prayers.
- Mary Charles' husband Bill fell in the yard and only has bumps and bruises and seems to be fine. Mary Charles's eyes are giving her trouble. Please be in prayer for her.



- Ed Guindon—Joy about being able to help family, enjoy fellowship and good food.
- Please be in prayer for Eloise Hatcher, Sharon Hill's mother. Cards can be sent to:
1069 Sunhill Road NW, Birmingham, AL 35215

Pastor Rick continued.....

This will not be an easy task, but it is one that I believe will be the foundation for growth not just for our church, but in the wider realm of God's kingdom.

What I am asking the Elders to do is first to pray for wisdom and guidance as we seek to find what it is God is asking us to be and do. They are putting together a questionnaire for the congregation so that all will have an input on the future direction of our church. I ask you to pray over these questions as you answer them and even put forth your own questions. This needs to be an endeavor we all take part in as we are all called to be part of the work God has for us. All voices are valuable and needed. But I can't stress enough the need for prayer, intentional prayer seeking God's guidance and direction for only then will we find our identity and our purpose.

Let me close by saying, I am excited about the opportunities God is going to reveal to us through this process of prayer, discernment, and dialogue. The future is bright, and I can't wait to see what God has in store for us going forward.

Rick Malugani

Senior Minister

Valley Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)

Thank You!

I am so grateful for all of the Valley's prayers and cards and phone calls. Valley has treated me with such care and concern. They are truly a great church with great members. Sincerely, Marilyn

BLANKETS OF LOVE



It's that time of year. Time to purchase a Blanket of Love. In 2023, Church World Service distributed 32,785 blankets to victims of floods, wildfires, tornadoes, and hurricanes in the USA and other countries. These blankets bring comfort, warmth and a sense of being wrapped in love and care to people experiencing difficult circumstances. On Sunday, May 5th and Sunday, May 12th the Disciples of Women will offer Valley member and friends the opportunity to purchase a blanket for \$10 each before and after worship. Payment may be by cash or check. Consider purchasing a blanket in memory or honor of someone, especially someone who you may have held in a blanket or someone who may have held you in a blanket.

Disciples Women

Free Books!!

There is a table set up outside of the library with free books to a good home. Please help yourself.

Disciples Women Meeting

The Disciples Women will begin a new study of the Gospel of Luke on Thursday, May 23rd at 10:00am at the church. We will use the book Luke: Jesus and the Outsiders, Outcasts and Outlaws by Adam Hamilton. All women are invited to join us for fellowship and discussion of chapter 1 of the book. If you are interested, please contact Ginny Guindon at 205-305-1169 (cell) so we can provide you with a book.

PERCENTAGE NIGHT AT ROJO TO BENEFIT GBM

Tuesday, May 7th, 2024 5:00pm—10:00pm
2921 Highland Ave. South
Dine-in or Carry-out

10% of ALL sales will help Greater Birmingham Ministries. GBM is a 55 year-old multi-faith, multi-racial organization sponsored by 20 diverse faith communities and dedicated to serving people in need while building stronger communities by bringing people together to pursue justice and inclusion for the vulnerable in our shared community. www.gbm.org



Young Adult

The Young Adult Sunday morning study will be beginning a new book in April, *A Woman Jesus can Teach*. So come join us for a cup of coffee and discussion at 9:30 am on Sunday mornings .

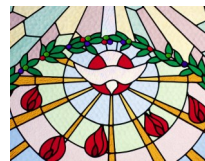
MAY - AAA

On Wednesday, May 22, 2024 AAA will travel to Tuscaloosa, Alabama to visit First Christian Church (D.O.C.) where Reverend Gary Edge, our former pastor is the minister. Gary will give us a tour of the church and talk about their activities. Afterward we will visit the Paul Bryant Museum, followed by lunch at a local restaurant.

The van will leave the church at 9:00am. The entrance fee at the museum is \$3.00 for senior adults; the van transportation fee is \$8.00 per person.

Everyone is welcome! Reservations are required by Monday, May 20, 2024 and should be given to Peggi Zinser. Thanks for your participation!

Lola Kiser



PENTECOST SUNDAY

Want to help start a new church? Maybe one in an area that has no church. One that shares the Good News that Christ is risen. We will celebrate Pentecost on Sundays May 19th and 26th and will receive your special offerings on those Sundays. One half of all offering received in Alabama/Northwest Florida will remain in our region to start new churches.

Ladies Spring Tea



PLEASE JOIN US FOR THE FIRST ANNUAL LADIES' SPRING TEA

SATURDAY, MAY 11, 2024

3:00 PM

THE PARLOR AT

VALLEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH
2600 CHEROKEE PLACE
BIRMINGHAM, AL 35216
(205) 879-0419

KINDLY RSVP BY MAY 3RD
PEGGI ZINSER
205-995-0492

Hats and Gloves optional

If you have a special "TEA CUP" bring it and share your story

