



Voice

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



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A Word from Your Pastor

It is no secret we live in a world that likes to classify people, to put people into categories or boxes, to label them and define them by that label. It makes it easier to denigrate, to isolate and to manipulate if we believe that all they are is the label we apply to them.

Even in the Christian faith we have labels, Christian right, conservative Christian, progressive Christian, liberal Christian among others. No longer is it okay to just be a Christian, we need a qualifier to tell what kind of Christian we are and what to which group we belong.

We are bombarded with messages that try to define what a true Christian is, what a true Christian believes and how a true Christian should act or even vote and if you don't well then you aren't a true Christian.

I know there are well intentioned and learned people who believe Jesus represents their idea of Christianity. They believe in their hearts that Jesus was a liberal, or a conservative, that Jesus would be for this or against that, that Jesus would back their understanding over and above the other's—view and this is not a new phenomenon. Over the ages, churches; which by the way means the people in those churches; have convinced themselves of their stance based on their interpretation of God's Word, sometimes good and life giving and at other times resulting in tremendous evil being perpetrated in the name of God.

I just wonder why we must attach labels, why we must designate ourselves as one type of Christian over and above another. I really don't think this is what Jesus had in mind as he ministered to and welcomed all who crossed his path. He didn't come as a conservative or a liberal or any other label we can attach. Jesus came out of love and to demonstrate that love through his life, death, and resurrection. Jesus came to offer redemption, salvation, and the opportunity for life everlasting in his glorious presence. The only requirement was to believe and to accept, no labels, no ideology, just a sinful people turning to the one who gave himself to relieve us of those sins.

Why can't we just be Christian, just be a follower of Jesus? What happened to the ideals Jesus professed in the way of commandments; love your God with all your heart, mind and soul and love your neighbor as yourself? What about Jesus telling us to love our enemies as well, to treat them with respect and dignity? What about Jesus telling us to care for the poor, the sick and the weakest of these? What about Jesus welcoming all to the table sharing a meal with even those we feel are unworthy or underserving? What about Jesus coming alongside those struggling, who are lost, who are forgotten, who are oppressed and giving them hope, strength and respect?

This isn't a liberal or conservative issue, it is a human issue, one that goes beyond labels and ideologies, it strikes at the very core of what it means to be a Christian and a committed follower of Jesus. This is who I claim to be, a Christian, a follower of Jesus who though flawed and broken, though imperfect and far from the glory of God has found a love that is beyond measure, a grace that is overflowing and a promise that is everlasting and it is this that I am called to share with others regardless of station, status or anything else. No other label is needed. Glory be to God.

**Rick Malugani
Senior Minister
Valley Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)**

Dates of Interest:

- Mar 21 - Lent Brown Bag and Program
- Mar 23- BVM Sing-a-long at North Hill Rehab
- Mar 24 Palm Sunday
- Mar 28 Maundy Thursday Service
- Mar 29 Good Friday Services
- Mar 31—Easter Sunday Sunrise Service Breakfast Worship Service
- April 6—Valley Work Day
- April 7—Food Pantry Canned fruit
- April 11—AAA trip
- April 17—Men's Luncheon
- April 21—Board Meeting
- April 22 Voice Deadline
- April 26-28 Regional Assembly Fairhope, AL

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.
- Kay Keith asked to keep the Homewood Band in your thoughts and prayers as they travel to and from Ireland to participate in the St. Patrick's Day parade.
- Rev. John Lambert passed away on Thursday, March 14th. Please pray for his family.
- Donnette Mee's neighbor Karl of 30 years passed away this week. Please be in prayer for his wife Holley.
- Food Pantry Sunday will be April 7th and the need is for canned fruit. However, you can bring your donations at any time during the month of April and the Outreach chairperson will take them to GBM for you.
- Jean Thrasher's friends Martha and Judy are coming for a visit. Martha can not talk. Your prayers are needed.
- Be in Prayer for David Brasher, longtime pianist and organist at First Christian Church(D.O.C.) in Birmingham and at times he substituted here at Valley. He is in UAB Intensive care suffering from Endocarditis, a bacteria that is affecting his blood stream. He is requesting no visitors, but asked for prayers as he battles this difficult disease.
- Jan Watts needs your prayers for her continued recovery.
- Clarence Sellers had a concern and is asking for prayers for his good friend, Charles "Red" Farmer who had a stroke.

Holy Week Devotionals

Holy Week Devotional Booklets are available on the desk near the elevator. You may get extras for friends or family if you wish.

Many Thanks for all who wrote devotionals and to those who helped prepare the Booklet. Happy Easter to all!
Lola Kiser

Easter Offering

We will receive the 2024 Easter Special Offering on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday, March 24th and 31st.

Gifts to the offering support ministries that help Disciples share the limitless love of God that overcomes death.

Easter Lilies

Easter is upon us., and its time to purchase Easter Lilies to decorate the sanctuary! The lilies are \$16 each, and as is our custom, when you purchase a lily, you may designate it in honor or memory of someone special to you. If you would like to purchase a lily, please call the church office or put you name on the sign-up sheet next Sunday. Checks will be made out to Valley Christian Church with the note "Easter Lilies".



Easter Services

All are invited to join us at 8:30am, March 31st for our Easter morning service to be held (weather permitting) in front of the church.

Following this service, we will gather for a fellowship breakfast hosted by Jean Thrasher and her team. We would like to have people sign up for this, so we know how much food to prepare. A sign-up sheet will be in the foyer.

We will then have our Easter worship service in the sanctuary at 10:30 am.

Come and join us as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord in our homes, in our churches and in our hearts.

Free Books!!

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

AAA Trip for April

Wetumpka – Known as the “Land of Rumbling Waters” by the Muscogee Creek Native Americans. The Valley Seniors will travel to Wetumpka on Thursday, April 11, 2024. The van will leave the church at 9:00 am, gas money is \$8.00 each. This is a town the HGTV’s Ben and Erin Napier revitalized for their show, Home Town Takeover. They have several interesting shops to visit and you can see the house where the movie “The Big Fish” was made. There are 4 War Memorials on Main Street that would be of interest and after lunch, still checking on a place for our lunch, we will travel to the Impact Crater Center where a meteorite landed 85 million years ago. Please call Peggi if you want to ride the van or will be driving your car. Peggi Zinser

Installation of Regional Minister

Please join us for the installation of our new Regional Minister Rev. Kerry Kesey on Saturday, 27th at 9:00 am at Fairhope Christian Church during the Regional Assembly.



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 .

Thanks to All!

Many Thanks to everyone who stuffed Easter eggs for the North Hill Rehab. You can bring them to church or just bring them on Saturday when we go up there. The eggs we have received already are really pretty and the residents will enjoy the candy inside. If you want to bring more stuffed eggs remember to wrap the candy individually.

Lenten Services

We invite you to join us for our weekly Lenten Lunch Devotions to be held Thursday, March 21st beginning at 11:15 am. We will meet in the parlor.

We will have a Maundy Thursday Service on March 28th beginning at 6:00 pm. Macedonia will join us for this worship service.

Our Good Friday service will be at noon on March 29th.

Please join us as we seek to draw closer to Jesus during this Lenten season.



A March Sing-a-Long

We will be meeting at the church at 10:00am to go ride the bus or take cars to North Hill Rehab and Nursing Home , 200 Pine Hill Road, Birmingham, Al 35217 for a Sing-a Long at 11:00am and to take the stuffed Easter eggs. Afterwards we will enjoy a lunch at Applebee’s Restaurant in Fultondale, Al

Pastoral Relations Committee

The Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC) has been formed and the Executive Committee has approved Beth Collier, Stewart Draper and Ginny Guindon to serve as its members. The PRC will begin meeting with Pastor Rick in the near future.