



December 7

Polly Bailey  
Randi Coleman  
\*Chris Coleman  
Alice Gibson  
Robert Gibson  
\*Alison Tanner

December 14

Helen Gibson  
Muir Steward  
John Bennett  
\*Kim Farish  
Kate Matheny  
\*Eileen McCoy

December 21

Kathy Mason  
Wiley Hales  
\*Sandra Brennan  
\*Pat Coleman  
Dona Sulzmann  
Kenny Sulzmann

December 24\*

Woodie Payne  
Buddy Harris

December 28

Randi Coleman  
Polly Bailey  
Ed Carson  
Brenda Montgomery  
\*Brenda Tanner  
\*Gary Tanner

Greeter:

Bailey Farish

Liturgists:

Eileen McCoy/Pat Coleman

\*communion preparation



*Hope Circle will meet  
December 1<sup>st</sup> at 9:30 am.*

*Serendipity Circle will  
meet December 8<sup>th</sup> at*

*6:00 pm at the Harrises.*

*Circle I will meet December 9<sup>th</sup> at 11:00  
am (place to be announced).*

*The CWF will have a brunch/ornament  
swap on Saturday, Dec. 20, at 10:00 am  
in the fellowship hall.*

**Christian Men's Fellowship  
Breakfast  
December 14<sup>th</sup>  
8:00 am**



*Thanks to everyone who helped with  
the Heart of Dixie Craft Fair and  
Bake Sale. Special thanks to Polly  
Bailey, Chair of the Bake Sale for all  
her hard work and the beautiful  
decorations; thanks to all who*

*brought items for the bake  
sale and made it so  
successful. Thanks to  
Sandra Brennan and the  
staff of DOC's kitchen for wonderful  
food. We are already planning for  
next year and have a waiting list of  
crafters who want to participate.*

*Martha & Muir*

*We want to give a big  
Thank You for those that  
helped us with the hot  
meals and the sack*



*lunches to our neighbors, through our East  
Tuscaloosa Soup Bowl ministry. We  
thank you for your donations, the Boston  
Butt sales, the cakes baked, and the time  
and talents that were shared.*

*Polly and Katie*

**On behalf of the Christian Women's  
Fellowship, I want to thank everyone  
who helped make the craft fair and  
bazaar a HUGE success: everyone who  
donated goods for the bake sale; and  
especially to Martha and Muir for their  
preparation throughout the year.**

**Sandra Brennan, CWF President**

**Once again, we are offering the  
option of  
alternative  
gift-giving  
through Heifer International. These  
gifts support sustainable farming  
around the world and are a  
meaningful gift for friends and family.  
Gift cards and prices are available on  
the display in the narthex. Checks are  
made payable to First Christian  
Church (designate Heifer Project) and  
placed in the offering plate, turned in  
to the church office or given to Randi  
Coleman.**



## Overseas Mission Highlights

### December 2008: Christmas in Japan

*Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.'*

Luke 1:38

Christianity first came to the islands of Japan during the 16th century, and the first Christmas celebration was reportedly held in 1565 by Father Frois. Christianity was forbidden during the 17th century, and it wasn't until 1858 that foreign missions were again allowed to come to Japan. This year, the United Church of Christ in Japan celebrates 150 years of Christianity in Japan. Today, Christians represent less than 1% of the population, although Christmas (pronounced kurisumasu) or seitansai (literally, "holy birth festival") celebrations have been embraced by many people in the wider culture. As in the United States, a commercial atmosphere has developed around the holiday. The message of Christian love has also led Christmas to become established as a festive event for couples, somewhat similar to Valentine's Day. Many families celebrate on Christmas Eve with a special Christmas cake. Churches celebrate with candlelight services, church concerts, and nativity pageants. In some churches a unique tradition has arisen. After the service on the Sunday before Christmas, Santa visits the children and gives them presents. In return, the children give Santa gifts of rice, so that they learn that it is important not only to receive gifts, but to give them as well. The rice is shared with children in need. In these ways, Christ's messages of loving one another and helping those who are in need are powerfully represented to the children.

## Christmas Season Schedule

The sanctuary is decorated for Christmas at the "Hanging of the Greens". This will be **Sunday (Nov 30th)** during the **worship service**.



Christmas Cantata

The **Cantata** will be **Sunday evening, Dec 7<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm.**

Our choir does an outstanding job each and every year. We are continually amazed at their talent!



Christmas Party

The annual **Church Christmas Party** will be **Sunday, December 14th at 6:00 p.m.** in the Fellowship Hall. This is a covered dish dinner with a focus on fellowship and outreach. This year's outreach project will benefit the Firehouse Shelter in Birmingham where our own Rob Davis is Shelter Coordinator.

Each family is asked to bring a package of men's briefs, boxers, or undershirts, preferably in sizes small or medium, to place under the tree at the Christmas Party. This is a year-round need at the men's shelter and all gifts will be greatly appreciated. If you need more information, contact Randi Coleman.

The **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service** is the most beautiful as well as most meaningful. It will be at **7:00 pm.** The



sanctuary is decorated (the evening before), special music and readings are chosen--what an exceptional way to celebrate Christ's birth with your family and friends.



# FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

## Staff

Minister – Rev. Scott Thayer  
 Music Director – Ron Montgomery  
 Youth Directors – Lauren Dupree & Justin Stiles  
 Children’s Director – Sandra Brennan  
 Nursery Attendent – Tina Smith  
 Secretary – Dona Sulzmann

## Office Hours

9:00 AM – 1:00 PM Monday through Friday

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**First Christian Church**  
**627 Paul W. Bryant Drive**  
**Tuscaloosa, AL 35401**

# FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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## **DECEMBER 2008**

## **THE EPISTLE**

I really like the strategy of our church’s Evangelism Committee. Instead of devising all kinds of new outreach programs, the Committee is using existing events sponsored by the congregation as opportunities for us to invite new people to join us. In the worship service two weeks ago, Evangelism Chairman Jon Atkinson encouraged us to invite neighbors and friends to come to the Thanksgiving Day worship and breakfast. In addition, the Committee hopes that we will open our hearts (and mouths) to visitors, inviting them to come to our Christmas cantata (December 7) and Christmas party (December 14). These are joyous and non-threatening opportunities for newcomers to have a first-time experience of our church. They are also very “kid-friendly” occasions to which visitors will feel comfortable bringing their children. I sincerely hope we will all find ways to practice this low-key, friendship evangelism during the holiday season.

In another vein, I would like to introduce a new regular column to the Epistle. Each month we plan to give you an update on what’s happening on the global evangelism stage. We’re calling this segment “**Overseas Mission Highlights**.” We kick off the series with this month’s article on Christmas in Japan. I hope you enjoy and are challenged by these updates from our Division of Overseas Ministries.

*Scott*

# DECEMBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 6:30 Circle of Prayer 7:00 Choir	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>  Anita Smelley	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b>  Christmas Cantata 6:00 pm Nisha Warbington	<b>8</b> 6:00 Serendipity @ Harrises	<b>9</b> 11:00 Circle I	<b>10</b> 6:30 Circle of Prayer 7:00 Choir	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>  Sharon Brennan Susan Barger Jose DeJesus	<b>13</b>
<b>14</b>  6:00 pm CHURCH CHRISTMAS PARTY Rusty Sigler	<b>15</b> ← 8:00 CMF Breakfast	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 6:30 Circle of Prayer 7:00 Choir  Ginger Bailey	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 10:00 CWF Brunch Ornament Swap 
<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 7:00 pm  Candlelight Service	<b>25</b>  MERRY CHRISTMAS	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> →  Brandi/Beau Hewett	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>			