

FIRST Impressions

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First Lutheran Church
2507 Highland Avenue
Birmingham, AL 35205
205.933.0380

www.firstlutheranbham.org

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Pastor's Pen Light for What Ails Us

"The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light." Isaiah 9:2a

There are intensities of darkness. A number of years ago, Becky visited Ruby Falls, which is deep under ground in a cave. We were led through a series of caves illumined by hidden spotlights. I'll never forget the last one we entered. It was the deepest in the whole series, the "farthest from the light," as our guide phrased it. After he had grouped us all together, he turned off every light in the cavern – and we were in the dark. Perhaps it was no darker than other places in the world, but I could not see my hand in front of my face—and I still remember the sensation of being in that total obscurity far beneath the surface of the earth!

Continued on page 2

Local Events

Saturday Mornings: The Market at Pepper Place; www.pepperplacemarket.com

Through 2/6: *Dolly Parton's 9 to 5: The Musical*, Virginia Samford Theatre;
www.virginiasamfordtheatre.org

2/1: *Marching Forward: Musical Reflections on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Samford University Brock Recital Hall;
www.alabamasymphony.org

2/11-13: Mercedes-Benz Marathon Weekend; Linn Park;
www.mercedesmarathon.com

2/11-27: *Once on this Island*, Red Mountain Theatre;
www.redmountaintheatre.com

2/17-26: Birmingham Restaurant Week Winter Edition, various local restaurants; www.bhamrestaurantweek.com

2/18-19: *Vivaldi's Four Seasons Recomposed*, Alys Stephens Center; www.alabamasymphony.org



(cont'd from p. 1)

In a different way, I have been in various levels of non-physical darkness at times in my life-my hopes destroyed, the future I had designed destroyed, little guidance for the next move. Has not each of us, however similarly, experienced the darkness of life's twist and turns?

Isaiah reminds us that "The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light." When Matthew echoes the words of the prophet he tells us that the light is Jesus, who by simply being with us has brought us our dawn.

At the time of my darkest gloom faced with fear and the isolation that deep darkness brings, God has recalled his word of promise to me that Jesus is with me giving me his light of life. I cherish those times of darkness where the presence of Jesus was my only light. They have persuaded me that anywhere I go, no matter how deep the darkness becomes, Jesus, is with me. Nothing can persuade me to the contrary. Light, by its very nature, dispels the gloom. Jesus, by His very nature disperses the confusion and death we encounter in darkness.

The Son of God comes with His presence in word and sacrament-guiding, correcting, admonishing, forgiving, and loving. He uses every means to lead us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Come, Bright and Morning Star; illumine our darkness and lead us from night to never-ending day. Amen

In His Peace,
Pastor Schultz

Worship with us Sundays at
10:15 a.m. in person
or via
Facebook or YouTube.



Called to Serve and Celebrate Ministry



No Mistakes

When my hopes fade and my dreams die.
And I find no answer by asking why.
I just keep on trusting and hang on to my faith.
Because God is just, He never makes mistakes.
Should the storms come and trials I must face.
When I find no solution, I rest in God's grace.
When life seems unfair and more than I can take.
I look up to the Father, He never makes mistakes.
God sees our struggles and every bend in the road.
But no mistake is ever made, cause He weighs every load.

--Lenora McWhorter

Blessings,
Lorenza Robinson
Called to Serve & Celebrate Ministry

Worship Ministry

Lifted Up that We May Live – John 3:14

As we continue to reflect upon the gracious blessings of love and mercy that we have received from God through His Son, Jesus Christ from His birth to the cross, it is time to rejoice and humble ourselves with repentant hearts in His love, knowing that we have been redeemed and the reparation has been paid for the ugliness of our sins.

Consequently, there are many aspects in which to define *LOVE* in our lives. Paul says, “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.” He tells us both the positive and negative aspects of love. The positive aspects can only be found in our Lord Jesus Christ, yet we can sometimes find both the positive and negative aspects of love in our own lives. And why is this? Sometimes we are dead in our transgressions and spiritual conditions have separated us from the love and our life with God. Are we no different from God’s chosen people? Are we still wondering in the wilderness in our daily walk in a world of chaos and confusion about God’s love?

Obliviously, looking back at the Israelites as they were led from Egypt by Moses, they must have forgotten how the blood of the Passover saved their first born from God’s angel of death as well as seeing the many miraculous situations that God had done through Moses. Scripture tells us they grumbled and spoke against God and Moses. What does God do? He allows venomous serpents to be among them and many are bitten and die. However, through His love for them, He had Moses make a model of a serpent and place it on a pole and be lifted up so if anyone is bitten, he may look up to the serpent on the pole in faith and be saved.

Nevertheless, many years later Jesus was saying to Nicodemus, “Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son on Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life.” Just as the Israelites looked up at the bronze snake in faith and lived, so will every sinner poisoned by sin who now looks up to Jesus in trusting faith. He or she will not perish but have eternal life. We must look to the cross of Jesus in faith, lifted up that we may be saved for our salvation.

In His Peace,
Charles Craig
Worship Ministry Chair

Christ Care Ministry Joy at the Break of Day

“Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.” (Psalm 30:5b)

At the dedication of the temple, Israel sang of life and death because there was life in the death of the lamb. We, too, who believe in Him, see life and death in the true temple of God, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb whose death is our life.

The Father heard Jesus crying for help in Gethsemane, and the Father heard Him in the resurrection, but only after the crucifixion’s sorrowful night. Now the Father hears us too, because that same body and blood is in us. But like Jesus, the resurrection comes after tarrying in death for a moment.

In the midst of being knocked down, God promised that He would draw Israel up and restore them to life. God the Father brought Jesus up from the grave and He will do the same for us. As death takes you and me at our appointed times by God into the pit of the grave, Jesus grasps us by the hand and lifts us out so we may join Him in the eternal feast of praise and thanksgiving.

For Jesus, the grueling night of His passion gave way to the dazzling daybreak of Easter morning. We, too, will arise in the morning for joyful dancing and singing. For we are baptized, washed with the blood of the Lamb, and clothed with Christ’s gladness, transforming our dying bodies into heavenly bodies.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, You know that our lives are but a breath. By Your incarnation You have shared our mortality and saved us from our transgressions. Hear our prayers, still our cries, and quiet our weeping, for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. (LSB Agenda, p.140)

Peace,
Pastor Tom
Christ Care Ministry

** Paraphrased from *Visitation Resources for the Care of Souls* - Edited By Arthur A. Just, Jr. and Scot A. Kinnaman - Concordia Publishing House - Saint Louis - Copyright © 2008 - CPH St. Louis, MO 63118-3968

President's Letter

Carry Your Cross Within Your Heart

"Rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings." – 1 Peter 4:13

Illness, poverty, pain, and the like must not be called a cross (to bear); they are not worthy of that name. But if we suffer persecution for our faith in Christ, that may rightly be called a cross. But how can it be found? Not in cloisters, but in the gospel and in true understanding of it. This is finding the cross: to know your own self, or to know the cross. Where do you find that? In your heart. Unless you find it there, the finding of it outwardly is of no avail.

"If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up the cross and follow me (Mark 8:34)." You must come to the point when you say, "My Lord and my God, would that I were worthy of it." You must be joyful about it, just as the saints were.

The honor of the cross must be inward, within your heart, so I thank God that I must suffer, and that must spring from a joyful will toward the cross or death. Is it not a wonder to have a ready will toward death, while everyone dreads or fears it? Thus is the cross sanctified.

Prayer: Lord God, I rejoice in the blessings of the here and now. Give me strength also to face my final hour. Amen.

In His Peace,

Stan Weir
Congregational President

**Paraphrased from a sermon of Martin Luther given in 1527*

Share the Love of Christ

Did you know that our 2021 Lenten & Advent Devotionals reached **over 1800 viewers??**

Join our adult and children outreach as we share quick devotionals from David Boyd and Ruth Geiser from their latest collections:
In View of God's Mercy

Lent is a season when we take a look at our lives in view of God's mercy toward us in the sacrifice of his Son for us on the cross.

The Cross and Me

Teach children the real meaning of "Take up your cross and follow me" with the true-to-life situational stories and scriptural reflections in *The Cross and Me*.

- Do you want to participate in our **Lenten video** devotionals?
- It's as simple as a selfie! Record yourself at home or on-site! Don't worry - you'll be amazing!

Please email secretary@firstlutheranbham.org



Sunday Morning Bible Study is Back!

Sunday morning bible study has resumed! Join us in the fellowship hall at 9:00 a.m. for an hour of study, discussion, and prayer.

Joy of the Lord

may the God of hope
fill you with all
Joy and Peace
in believing, so that by
power of the Holy Spirit
you may abound
in hope.

Romans 15:13

Change in Mobile Giving

GivePlus is becoming Vanco Mobile!
A brief message from GivePlus:

“To inform your members about all the great features and updates in Vanco Mobile, we will email your members who now use GivePlus with details about the Vanco Mobile app. Our message is simply to notify your members that GivePlus Mobile will not be supported or functional after January 31, 2022, as your church moves to the improved Vanco Mobile app. Only church members who use the GivePlus Mobile app will be contacted.”





FIRST LUTHERAN STAFF

INTERIM PASTOR

Rev. Kurtis Schultz

OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

Rev. Kurtis Schultz

MINISTRY COORDINATORS:

CHRIST CARE

Rev. Tom Lackey

OUTREACH & INREACH

Vacant

SERVE & CELEBRATE

Lorenza Robinson

FACILITIES & PROPERTIES

Stan Weir

WORSHIP

Charles Craig

FIRST IMPRESSIONS EDITOR

Heather Lackey

Birthdays & Anniversaries



2/3: Desland Robinson

2/7: Martha Lampella

2/7: Jana Rotton-Murphy

2/14: TJ Mercer

2/22: Everett Robinson

2/24: Pat Thompson

2/27: Sheree McGraw

**No February Anniversaries
on Record**

Worship Team...February 2022

February 6

Pastor: Kurtis Schultz

Worship Assistant: Glen
Thompson

Reader: Robert Regulus

Live Stream :

Shane Harris & Jay McGraw

Music: Larry Donaldson

February 20

Pastor: Tom Lackey

Worship Assistant: Anthony
McGraw

Reader: Wendy Harris

Live Stream Assistants:

Shane Harris & Jay McGraw

Music: Becky Schultz

February 13

Pastor: Tom Noon

Worship Assistant: Robert Regulus

Reader: Frances Robinson

Live Stream Assistants:

Shane Harris & Jay McGraw

Music: Larry Donaldson

February 27

Pastor: Tony Ramsey

Worship Assistant: Charles Craig

Reader: Eva Hill

Live Stream Assistants:

Shane Harris & Jay McGraw

Music: Larry Donaldson



**MAN UP! Meets the 4th Saturday
of the month at 8:30 a.m. All
men are welcome to join us for a
time of fellowship, prayer, and
devotion.**

Contact Lorenza Robinson for
information on how MAN UP! is
meeting during the pandemic.

