

FIRST Impressions

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A Publication of First Lutheran Church • Birmingham, AL

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First Lutheran Church
2507 Highland Avenue
Birmingham, AL 35205
205.933.0380
www.firstlutheranbham.org

[View our Church Calendar](#)



Pastor's Pen This is Living

"Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die'." - John 11:25-26

We get confused about the word *life*. "That's life" often means "too bad, that's the way it is." Or we might say, "What a life," meaning, "this is wonderful." We all value life. We hold onto it as long as we can, and we mourn its loss. Sometimes we are under the mistaken idea that life consists of who we are, what we have, what we do, and whom we know. If those are our thoughts, then these words of Jesus make no sense. Earlier in this Gospel he told his disciples, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly"

Continued on page 2

Local Events

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

3/8: American Theatre Guild presents *The Simon & Garfunkel Story*, BJCC; www.americantheatreguild.com/birmingham

3/11-12: Mendelssohn's Scottish Symphony; UAB's Alys Stephen's Center; www.alabamasymphony.org

3/18: *Classical Mystery Tour* - A Beatles Tribute, Alabama Theatre; www.alabamasymphony.org

3/25: Eric Church in concert, BJCC; www.bjcc.org

3/26: 14th Annual Rumpshaker 5K, Regions Field; www.rumpshaker5k.com

3/31 - 4/3: American Theatre Guild presents *Fiddler on the Roof*, BJCC; www.americantheatreguild.com/birmingham

3/31 - 4/10: Stephen Sondheim's *Company*, Virginia Samford Theatre; www.virginiagamfordtheatre.org



(cont'd from p. 1)

(John 10:10). He was speaking to people who were full of physical life. So obviously he meant something else when he used the word.

Jesus, in claiming to be the source of life, is talking about another kind of life. It is not limited to tangible or physical things, but rather to those defined by the spirit. There is an eternal or spiritual life that we can live while we are continuing to live in this present world. That kind of life comes from a close relationship with the source of life - Jesus. It can be described by its qualities - inner peace, honesty, hope and expectancy, a sense of the constant presence of God, direction and purpose, fulfillment, contentment, joy.

While telling Mary and Martha that their brother would physically rise from the dead, even more important, he was offering spiritual life to them.

Lent is a time for Christians to see how sin has made our earthly life empty and shallow. Holy Week reveals the depth of God's love as he ransoms us from our lives to give us his life. Easter is our celebration of God's gift of new life.

This month as we begin our Lenten journey may it lead us through the awe of Holy Week to the shout of Easter "THIS IS LIVING!"

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I receive your offer of life. Fill me with your life today. Amen.

In His Peace,
Pastor Kurt

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



Called to Serve and Celebrate Ministry

Bible Verses About Believing

Matthew 21:22 - "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing, yall receive."

John 3:16 - "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

John 6:35 – “And Jesus said unto them, ‘I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirsty.’”

Hebrews 11:6 – “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

Mark 11:24 - "Therefore I say unto you, what things soever you desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

Luke 8:50 – “But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, ‘Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.’”

Romans 15:13 – “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.”

Mark 9:23 – “And Jesus said to him, ‘If you can? All things are possible to him who believes.’”

Mark 9:24 – “And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, ‘Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.’”

Matthew 9:28 – “And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, ‘Believe ye that I am able to do this?’ They said unto him, ‘Yea Lord.’”

John 20:29 – “Jesus said unto him, ‘Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.’”

John 6:47 - "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life."

Mark 16:16 - "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned."

1 John 3:23 – “This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.”

John 11:40 - Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?"

Romans 10:11 - For the scripture says, "Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed."

Blessings,

Lorenza Robinson

Called to Serve & Celebrate Ministry



Worship Ministry Extreme Makeover

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come.”

- 2 Corinthians 5:17

Many things have changed in the world since our Lord created our fore-parents Adam and Eve. We live in a world where things and man are constantly being changed. We are transforming ourselves as well as our attitudes into whatever fashion or form that we desire or think right. However, there are some things that have remained constant throughout the ages, and that is our Lord’s Word, His love, His forgiveness and compassion, and His promises and patience with us through His Son. We were buried with Him in baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we may live a new life.

Consequently, the capacity to see both our fellow man and Christ in their light comes from this inner transformation achieved by being in Christ. This phase describes a mystical experience in which we live because Christ lives in us. “A man in Christ” is Paul’s definition for a Christian. It implies an inner change which is equivalent to a new creation. A person in Christ is not merely improved or reformed, which implies no more than an external change. Rather, he is remade. He is different from what he was at his best. The old may refer to the desires and purposes of a self-centered life and the new, the purposes of a Christ-centered life. The essential difference is an inner change wherein his thoughts and ambitions are no longer focused on himself but on Christ and the interest of others. The old has passed away ...the new has come.

There is a transformation of values. Hardship, suffering, disappointment, and misfortune have become the means of God’s challenge or of His discipline, like the tools of the potter which gives the cup its shape, both for use and to serve. As Jeremiah says, sometimes the pot is marred in the potter’s hand. Sometimes the pot does not do what it was designed to do. But the potter takes and breaks it and molds and makes it what he would have it be. Aren’t we glad to know that when we are marred and broken, the Lord is not through with us yet? We should want him to re-create us. When we are in God’s hand, we can then receive an “**extreme makeover.**”

In His Peace,
Charles Craig
Worship Ministry Chair

Christ Care Ministry

Christ's Love for Us - A Lenten Prayer

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ as we look forward together to this Lenten Season at First Lutheran Church. For the newsletter article this month, I have put together a Lenten prayer and invite you to use this prayer during this special season. Please examine the words carefully with the eyes of your heart as you reflect upon the Cross of Christ and what He endured for you. Then ask yourselves the question, *"What is our response to Christ's great love for us?"* (see 1 John 4:19)

A Lenten Prayer

Dearest Lord Jesus, only Son of the Father, who became human flesh to die for and redeem me, a lost and condemned creature, graciously look upon me with Your eyes of love this Lenten season and let me find cleansing and healing in Your precious blood.

My sins brought nothing but agony and pain at your passion in the garden and nailed You to a tree on Golgotha where You were forsaken that I might not be forsaken throughout all eternity. Make me see the ugliness of my own sin and then Your wondrous love that would not let me die.

Grant me to think upon Your passion not just through the days of this Holy Season, but every day of my earthly life. May I not be distracted by worldly things but draw me closer each day that I might find in You forgiveness and peace.

Bless this sacred Lenten season throughout Your Holy Church on earth and grant the priesthood of all believers the grace to proclaim Your glorious passion with hearts dedicated to Your good and gracious will that all who hear this message of forgiveness and mercy may love you more and more. Abide in our homes and let sin have no dominion over us. As I think anew Your death for my transgressions, make me bold to live to You today and tomorrow and forever. Amen.

Be at peace, beloved, for God is with us all today,

Pastor Tom Lackey

Christ Care

Website Refresh!!!

When you keep all the awesome content, and refresh with new, you get a wonderful website! Please visit us and tell us what you think, what you like, what you would like to see more of!



President's Letter

We Are Set Free by His Death

"For freedom, Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery." - Galatians 5: 1

Christ has not set us free from human duties but from eternal wrath. Where? In the conscience. That is the limit of our freedom, and it must go no further. For Christ has set us spiritually free; that is, he has set us free in the sense that our conscience is free and joyful and no longer fears the coming wrath of God. That is true freedom, and no one can value it highly enough. For who can express what a great thing it is that a man or woman is certain that God is no longer angry with them and will never be angry with them again, but for the sake of Christ, is now, and ever will be, a gracious and merciful Father! Truly, it is a wonderful freedom above all understanding, that God's high majesty is gracious to us.

From this there follows another freedom, that we, through Christ, are set free from the law, sin, death, hell, and the power of the devil. For, as the wrath of God can no longer frighten us, because Christ has set us free from it, so the law and sin can no longer accuse or condemn us.

Prayer: Eternal God, we pray for those who are oppressed by the power of evil and for freedom for those who suffer poverty, oppression and discrimination. Amen

In His Peace,

Stan Weir
Congregational President

From a sermon by Martin Luther, based on the book of Joel and its commentary.

Share the Love of Christ

**Join us and our friends from Unity and St. Paul
Lutheran Churches for our daily
Lenten Devotionals!**

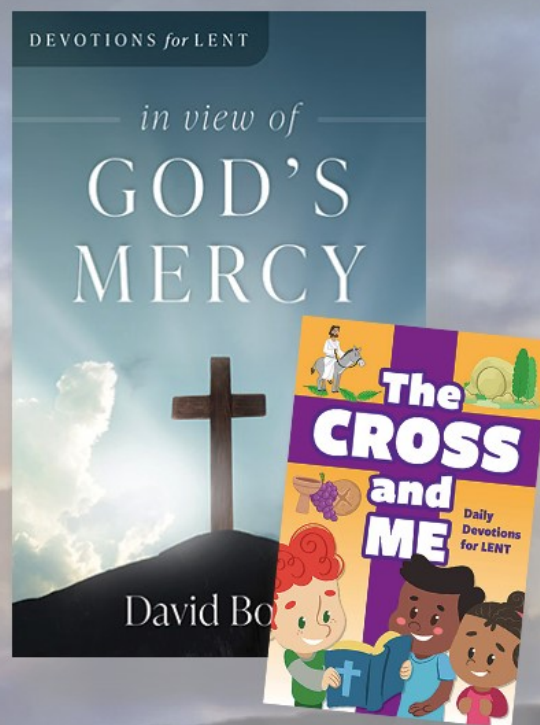
These are available every day on Facebook
and YouTube. If you like what you see, please share
with your family and friends!

These adult and children quick devotionals are taken from David Boyd and Ruth Geiser 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*.



Sunday School 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

BE NOT
AFRAID
-ONLY-
BELIEVE

MARK 5:36

Change in Mobile Giving

GivePlus is now 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 have been using 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.”



LWML News

Painting the Planet Purple with Servanthood

1942 -2022 -- 80 YEARS of GOD'S GRACE

Preparation and Celebration

The last few months the church and congregants have been making preparations and celebrating. During Advent we prepared for and celebrated Jesus' birth. In January, we welcomed a new year and the Epiphany of our Lord. February was a month for love and we were in awe of Jesus' Transfiguration.

The month of March is here. We humble ourselves on Ash Wednesday for the start of the Lenten season. During Lent, we reset our spirit with prayer and fasting. Our heart is repentant and thankful to our Lord and Savior for His sacrifice. Next month, we will rejoice in His resurrection as we worship in spirit and truth. To God be the Glory!

Save the Date:

Time to Sparkle – Zechariah 9:16

The LWML Ladies of the Mountain Lakes Zone will host the 39th Biennial LWML Gulf States District Convention **April 22-23, 2022** at the Holiday Inn-Research Park in Huntsville, AL.

Convention Speakers:

President Eric Johnson – LCMS Southern District President (Friday Night Service Proclaimer)

Erin Alder – Director of the Short-term Mission Program for LCMS International Mission (Keynote Speaker)

2022 Gulf State District Convention Gifts from the Heart Recipients:

Ascension Lutheran Preschool & CDC **AND** Grace Lutheran CDC

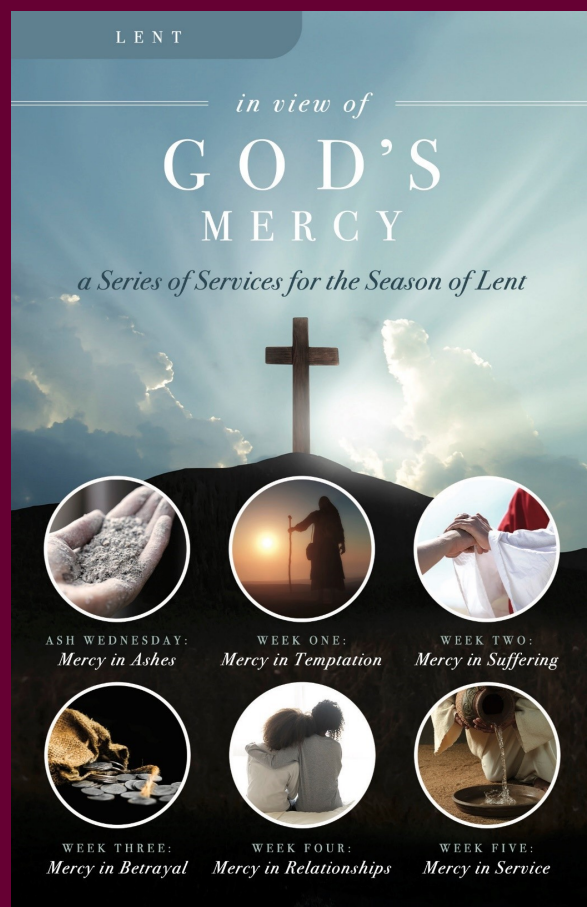
For additional information visit the LWML Gulf State District website, <https://www.lwmlgulfstates.org> Please keep this event in your prayers.

Today and always, we are surrounded by **HIS** grace and mercy.
Serve the LORD with gladness.

Sheree McGraw, President
First Lutheran Church LWML



Lent Schedule 2022



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. We, in turn, are called by God, especially during this time of repentance and reflection, to be living sacrifices for him, displaying our devotion to him in word and deed.

ASH WEDNESDAY

Mercy in Ashes • Joel 2:13 • As we are marked with ashes on this day, a reminder to us of our sins, we are reminded, too, of the mercy of our God who lifts us from our ashes to new life in Christ.

WEEK ONE

Mercy in Temptation • 1 Corinthians 10:13 • In the midst of temptation, our merciful God provides us with a way out through his Son, who was tempted just as we are, yet without sin.

WEEK TWO

Mercy in Suffering • 1 Peter 2:23 • No life is without suffering, but our sufferings are not worth comparing to the glory to be revealed to us in Jesus by God's great mercy.

WEEK THREE

Mercy in Betrayal • 1 Peter 3:11 • Though we may turn away from our God again and again, our Lord continues to call us back into his merciful arms for Jesus' sake.

WEEK FOUR

Mercy in Relationships • Ephesians 4:32 • Within the communities God has placed us, we are given the grace to treat one another as Christ has cared for us in his love and mercy.

WEEK FIVE

Mercy in Service • Hebrews 6:10 • In response to God's kindness to us in Jesus, we serve in mercy the needs of those around us by Christ's example.

The Cross And Me Mobile

We have 25 mobiles for children! Each day a new piece is added to the mobile, creating a Lenten decoration for kids and families. Great for Ages 5-10.

Email secretary@firstlutheranbham.org

To order yours today!



MIDWEEK ACTIVITIES DURING LENT:

March 2

Ash Wednesday Service - 6:00 p.m. (no dinner)

Wednesdays, March 9 - April 6

Dinner - 5:15 p.m.

Evening Prayer Service - 6:00 p.m.

Call Committee Update

It is Important That You are Informed

The Call Committee comprised of Frances Foy, Wendy Harris, Henry Mosley, Robert Regulus, and Glen Thompson feels it is very important that the congregation stay informed about where the committee is in calling a pastor. Each month an article is placed in the newsletter to keep the congregation informed, but sometimes it is felt that few people are well informed about what is happening. The Committee will continue to provide progress reports each month but we need your feedback. Please let us know if you read this article.

On February 4 we received a new call list from President Johnson. Seven pastors from across the country are on the list. It is an excellent list! All of the pastors have between 6 to 9 years of experience which should make them affordable for the congregation. There is broad range of ages. Some of the pastors are in their 30's while some are in their 40's and 60's. At least half had previous work experience before going into the seminary. All are married and all but one has children. Most use a traditional style of worship but one prefers contemporary worship. Pastor Schultz has printed a copy of their Pastor Information Form (PIF) and Self Evaluation Tool (SET) for Pastors and will make this information available to any member of the congregation for review. Since this information is considered personnel records, they cannot be removed from the church's office. Please contact Pastor Schultz to schedule an appointment if you want to review the documents.

The Call Committee met on February 13 and decided to interview all of the pastors. It was decided that we will try to schedule interviews the last week of February and the first week of March. The committee would then decide who it will recommend to the congregation for a call. The committee has set March 15 as its target date for this recommendation. A voters' meeting could occur as early as the first Sunday in April.

Please pray for the Call Committee and the pastors that are on our list. Pray that the Holy Spirit will guide the committee to find the pastor that God has chosen to shepherd our congregation.

Glen Thompson
Call Committee Chairman

Your Reviews Help Us!

Did you know that taking a few seconds to leave us a 5 star review on [Google](#) and [Yelp](#) helps extend our visibility to others who may be searching?





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



3/11: Wayne Speegle

3/12: Ginger Reeves

3/16: Eva Hill

3/25: Jay McGraw

3/28: Gwen Regulus

3/30: Andy Sullivan

3/17: Pat & Glen Thompson

3/23: Vivian & Harold McNair

Worship Team...March 2022

March 6

Pastor: George Murdaugh

Worship Asst: Henry Mosley

Reader: Judy Drews

Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris & Jay McGraw

Music: Larry Donaldson

March 20

Pastor: Tom Lackey

Worship Asst: Robert Regulus

Reader: Sheree McGraw

Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris & Jay McGraw

Music: Becky Schultz

March 13

Pastor: Tom Noon

Worship Asst: Glen Thompson

Reader: Jay McGraw

Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris & Jay McGraw

Music: Larry Donaldson

March 27

Pastor: Tony Ramsey

Worship Asst: Anthony McGraw

Reader: Carol Lackey

Live Stream Asst: 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.

