

FIRST Impressions

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A Publication of First Lutheran Church · Birmingham, AL

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[View our Church Calendar](#)



Pastor's Pen The Final Word

"If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied."
- 1 Corinthians 15:19

Among other wondrous things, Easter reminds us that there is much, much more to life than the things which we presently can see, touch, feel, and experience. The Gospel writers tell us that when the disciples entered Jerusalem with Jesus, they were mesmerized by the enormity and splendor of the temple (see Mark 13: 1ff). Historical records show that they had good reason for their awe. But Jesus cautioned them not to take too much stock in the "wonderful stones" which they saw before their eyes. Someday, he warned, the temple would all be rubble.

Continued on page 2

Local Events

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

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

4/9: 9th Annual Cahabaque, Cahaba Brewing Company;
www.cahabaque.com

4/22-24: Alabama Ballet presents *Don Quixote*, BJCC;
www.alabamaballet.org

4/23-25: Magic City Art Connection, Sloss Furnaces;
www.magiccityart.com

4/23 - 5/8: Decorators' Showhouse 2022, Hallmark Farms;
www.alabamasymphony.org/event/decorators-showhouse-2022-hallmark-farm

4/24-25: Corks & Chefs, Sloss Furnaces;
www.magiccityart.com/corks-chefts



(cont'd from p. 1)

In such passages as these, and in other more personal ways, we are often reminded that even the most glorious creations of this earthly life inevitably will come to an end. And of this stinging truth, there is no more convincing messenger than death itself. A closing breath speaks more profoundly to the human soul than all the words our voices can muster.

But there is a word, there is another sound, which has an even more final ring to it than death's shrill peal. "He is risen!" is the eternal song of the people of God. Upon these brief and simple words hang all the weight of human hope and faith. Nothing can change this truth, and nothing can surpass it in its power. In the midst of the rubble, in the midst of all that is tainted by mortality, in the midst even of death, there waves a banner of shimmering colors whose message supersedes everything that has come before: "But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead."

Hope that is placed in the God of Jesus Christ, says the apostle Paul, can never disappoint us. Hope that is placed in anyone or anything less, however, will ultimately let us down. The good news of Easter, the gospel of Christ's resurrection, is that our hope has not been misplaced. Death, our fiercest enemy, has been defeated. Henceforth, what we may think of as "the end" is not really the end at all. The final word belongs to God, and that Word goes on forever.

Prayer: You fell asleep in mortal flesh, O Lord and King; but on the third day you rose again. You raised Adam from decay, you did away with death; you, the immortal Passover, the world's salvation. Glory to you. Amen

In His Peace,
Pastor Kurt

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

Your donations are needed for our Easter Egg Hunt!

- Individually wrapped candy, small games, and prizes that will fit inside plastic eggs, and plastic eggs will help to make our event a success.
- Please bring items to the Fellowship Hall by Sunday, April 10th.



Called to Serve and Celebrate Ministry*A Prayer for Lenten Grace*

Loving God,

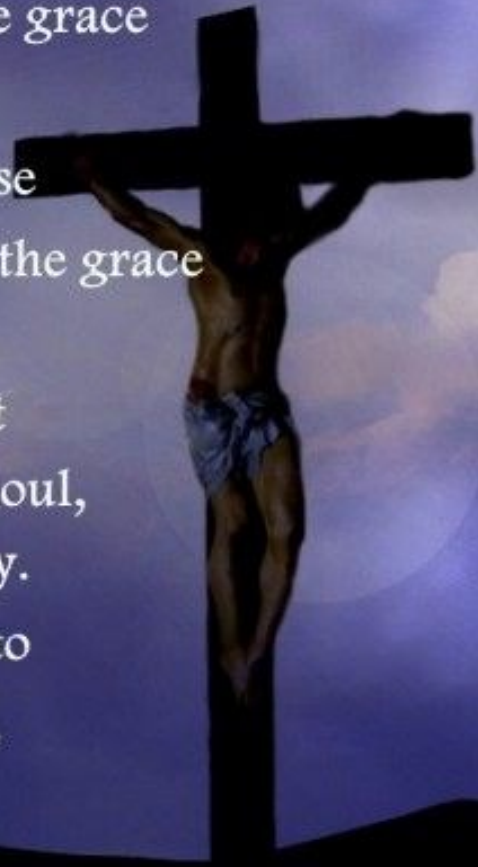
During the sacred season of Lent, bring me closer to you.
Prepare a place in my home and heart for silence and solitude, so that I may re-discover the grace of a prayer-full life.

Enlarge my heart so that I give to those in need and, in so doing, re-discover the grace of gratitude and generosity.

Help me to fast from those things that threaten the well-being of body and soul, remind me of the grace and simplicity.

May this season be grace-filled time to rekindle my love for and faith in you.

Amen.



Blessings,

Lorenza Robinson

Called to Serve & Celebrate Ministry

Worship Ministry

Seek, Call, Believe and Confess Jesus Is Lord

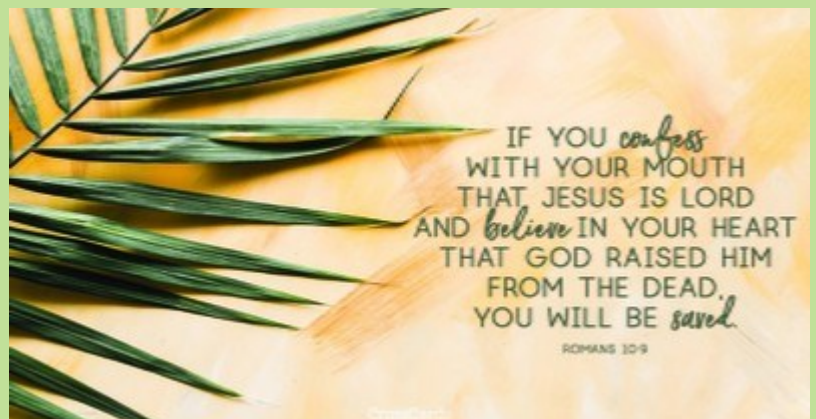
What should it mean to you and all mankind created by our Lord to seek, to call, to believe and to confess Jesus Christ is Lord? Shouldn't we be doing this to secure our eternal salvation? Yet it is God who invites each of us to participate in His offer to quench our thirst for salvation. God is on a rescue mission. He constantly tries to convince mankind that He alone can fulfill our desires and permanently meet our needs to quench our thirst for salvation. He continues to beckon us to come to Him through His Word, the Good News to all mankind. The questions are:

- Are you seeking the Lord Jesus Christ today with a sincere heart to quench your thirst for salvation?
- Are you calling on the Lord in prayer asking for His righteous guidance that only He can give and to make use of you or what He would have you do?
- Are you calling on the Lord in prayer to become acquainted with Him for your needs, or use Him as the way to the Spirit as your guide and His Word as your rule for reconciliation and repentance?

God is patiently waiting on each of us and is near and can be found; it is not in vain to seek and to call upon Him at any time. David speaking to his son Solomon says, "... If you seek him (God) he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, He will reject you forever."

However, in our world of fast evolving technological advancements and the premium mankind has placed on time and themselves, it seems there is not enough time to seek, to call, to believe and to confess or to quench our thirst for God. Many people put their earthy needs and wants for the world above their thirst for the eternal bliss, the inexpressible joy of God's kingdom and His Salvation by placing their values first to include self and pleasures of the world. These people neither seek nor thirst. They have no sense of their need and are in no pain or uneasiness about their souls. Without faith it is impossible to please God. Anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him. It is with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

In His Peace,
Charles Craig
Worship Ministry Chair



Christ Care Ministry

Stumbling Under the Cross

“And they led him out to crucify him. And they compelled a passer-by, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.” - Mark 15:20c - 21

He was torn and His robe was stiffening with his own blood. Someone exclaimed, “Ah, my Lord, they scourged you!” Yet another cried out, “Oh my Lord! You will never lie down to sleep again!”

Four soldiers and a Roman Centurion then lead our Lord through the city. Such a tiny force. Scarcely noticeable. Who notices? It’s now mid-morning and the streets are crowded with citizens and merchants and the Passover Festival pilgrims. They are all busy crying out their wares in high pitched voices and indifferent to yet another execution. One can see the high priests amid the faces, moving along parallel to our Lord, making sure the deed gets done. There the Apostle John is, with a small number of friends and your Mother. I visualize myself there with them, peering from the side streets, startled, in shock, weeping. We see your blood splattered face and garments, Jesus!

The soldiers become impatient. They dart their eyes here and there through the throng. What do they expect? Or fear? Your eyes, Jesus, are half closed, your legs slow and heavy laden, your body caved around a rough piece of timber. You are carrying your own cross beam at the stomach. You are dragging it beside your feet, moving awkwardly from side to side ... just pulling the gigantic thing. Any other man would have heaved it onto his shoulders. Not you. I know why not,

and I ache with anger for what the world is doing to You. You shuffle and stumble, hitting the stone-way hard. The sun is full up, round and hot. There is dust on your lips that seems to cry out silently for water.

Those Guards give You no quarter. They yell out as they again lay their scourging whips across Your back while You struggle to get up. There is no dignity left. That too has been taken from you, my Jesus. Your friends want to help but most are unable. One cries out, let me carry the cross. He can’t! Let me! But the soldiers only scoff at one woman who is too small as another grabs the closest pilgrim by the shoulder and forces him to take the cross and follow them out of the city. The women call out, Oh, Jesus, but then are left with nothing to do! Does that stranger just picked understand the honor? You glance at Jesus. You so long for such a glance. Please, please look at me! Jesus, Jesus. What can I do for you?

Follow.

Soli Deo Gloria,
Pastor Tom

**** Paraphrased from *Reliving the Passion* by Walter Wangerin, Jr
© by Walter Wangerin, Jr. 1992. Harper Paperbacks.**

President's Letter

Our Savior Must Be Both Divine and Human

"Though he was in the form of God, (he) did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form....."
- Phillipians 2: 6-8

On the one hand, we need a Savior who can save us from god and prince of this world, the devil, and likewise, from sin and death, that is, a Savior who is eternal God, through whom all who believe in him are justified and blessed. For if he is no more and no higher than Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, or John the Baptist, he is not our Redeemer. But if he, as the Son of God, sheds his blood for us in order to redeem us and cleanse us from sin, and if we believe it and hold it under the devil's nose whenever he frightens and plagues us with our sin, the devil will soon be beaten so that he must give way and leave us in peace.

On the other hand, we need a Savior who is also our brother, of our flesh and blood, made in all things like us, yet without sin, as we are taught to say and sing as little children, so that I can say with a joyful heart, "I believe in Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, who sits at the right hand of the Father and intercedes for me, who is also my flesh and blood, yes, my brother. Because of us humans and for our salvation he came down from heaven and was made man and died for our sin."

Prayer: I believe that Jesus Christ, begotten of the Father in eternity, and also a true human being, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord. (from Luther's Small Catechism)

In His Peace,
Stan Weir
Congregational President

From Martin Luther's sermon on John 1

Share the Love of Christ

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

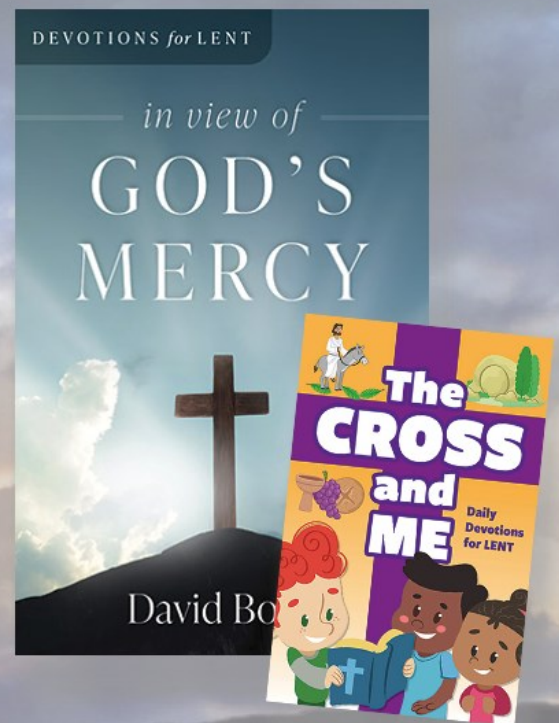
These are available every day on Facebook and YouTube. If you like what you see, please share with your family and friends!

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

May God bless you at Easter,
And keep you all year through.
May God give you all the faith it takes,
To make your dreams come true.
May His love and wisdom always help,
To guide you on your way.
May His light shine down upon you now,
To bless your Easter Day.



Easter
Blessings

Wishing you a blessed and joyful Easter.



LWML News

Painting the Planet Purple with Servanthood

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

This month the Gulf State District LWML will paint the city of Huntsville with **PURPLE SPARKLES**.

Why?

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.

Theme:

Time to Sparkle – Zechariah 9:16

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 continue to pray for a successful event and for God's protection of safety for those traveling.

Today and always, we are surrounded by **HIS** grace and mercy.

Serve the LORD with gladness,

Sheree McGraw, President
First Lutheran Church LWML





Worship Schedule for **Holy Week**



- 4/14 - **Maundy Thursday** 6:00pm
- 4/15 - **Good Friday Tenebrae** 6:00pm
- 4/17 - **Easter Breakfast** 8:45am
- 4/17 - **Easter Egg Hunt** 9:15am
- 4/17 - **Easter Worship** 10:15am



Voter's Meeting

Please Join Us!

Sunday, April 10

11:30 a.m.

Agenda: Pastoral Call

Call Committee Update

During the first two weeks of March, the Call Committee interviewed five candidates from our call list. The pastors interviewed included Rev. Matt Gulseth from Pullman, WA, Rev. Mark Hartsough from Newark, OH, Rev. Chris Howell from Des Moines, WA, Rev. Chad Ingle from Ozark, AL, and Rev. Wayne Miller from Mobile, AL. On March 15th, the committee met and discussed the candidates and chose a candidate they felt was the best match for the congregation. This candidate was recommended to and accepted by the Board of Directors. The board then scheduled a Voters' Meeting for April 10. The meeting will be held in the Fellowship Hall after the worship service.

Information concerning the recommended candidate will be emailed to the church membership. Members will have the opportunity to see the recorded interview with the candidate and to review the Pastor's Information Form and the Self-Evaluation Tool (SET) for pastors prior to the April 10 meeting.

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



4/13: Tom Lackey
4/15: Sunni Sharit
4/28: Grayson Crenshaw
4/29: Rosie Walton

**No April anniversaries
on record.**

Worship Team...April 2022

April 3

Pastor: George Murdaugh
Worship Asst: Charles Craig
Reader: Frances Foy
Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris &
Jay McGraw
Music: Larry Donaldson

April 17 - Easter Sunday

Pastor: Kurtis Schultz
Worship Asst: Glen Thompson
Reader: Pat or Glen Thompson
Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris &
Jay McGraw
Music: Becky Schultz

April 10 - Palm Sunday

Pastor: Tom Lackey
Worship Asst: Henry Mosley
Reader: Robby Trione
Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris &
Jay McGraw
Music: Larry Donaldson

April 24

Pastor: Tony Ramsey
Worship Asst: Robert Regulus
Reader: Henry Mosley
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.**

