

FIRST Impressions

What's INSIDE

A Publication of First Lutheran Church · Birmingham, AL

- 1 Pastor's Pen
- 1 Church Calendar Link
- 1 Local Events
- 2 Joy of the Lord
- 3 Serve & Celebrate Ministry
- 4 Worship Ministry
- 5 Christ Care Ministry
- 6 President's Letter
- 7 Call Committee Update
- 8 LWML News
- 9 Birthdays & Anniversaries
- 9 June Worship Team



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[View our Church Calendar](#)



Pastor's Pen Keep on Believing

"Do not be seized with alarm and have no fear, only keep on believing."
- Mark 5:36b

Jairus took a considerable risk when he prostrated himself before Jesus and begged for his daughter to be healed. After all, he was a leader of the synagogue, a respected man schooled in the law, a righteous man who knew what God expected of his people and what they could expect of God. In Jerusalem the Pharisees and the scribes had condemned Jesus for healing on the Sabbath, claiming Jesus was possessed by Satan. For Jairus to acknowledge Jesus' power to heal was to separate himself from all those other religious

Continued on page 2

Local Events

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

Through 7/3: USFL Football, Protective Life Stadium; www.theusfl.com

6/3-26: *Kinky Boots*, Red Mountain Theatre; www.redmountaintheatre.org

6/4: Alabaster CityFest, Thompson High School; www.alabastercityfest.com

6/5: Vulcan's 118th Birthday Bash, Vulcan Park & Museum;
www.visitvulcan.com

6/9-26: Rodgers and Hammerstein's *The Sound of Music*,
Virginia Samford Theatre; www.virginiasamfordtheatre.org

6/11: Caribbean Food and Music Festival, Debardeleben Park
in Bessemer; www.cacaoonline.org



(Cont'd from p. 1)

leaders who denied who Jesus was. And yet, Jairus found himself in such need on that day, that he forgot all the “right” reasons that would have kept him from bowing before Jesus’ feet. Instead, he chose to hope for healing for his beloved daughter, who was at the point of death.

Nevertheless, Jairus would have bigger battles to face before the end of the day. Before Jesus could reach his home to lay hands on Jairus’ daughter, the news had come to them: “Your daughter has died.” Knowing how much Jairus was suffering at this point, Jesus encouraged him, “Do not be seized with alarm and have no fear, only keep on believing.”

Jesus knew that the healing that Jairus had sought for his daughter had suddenly become impossible for an earthly mind. It was one thing for Jairus to believe that Jesus could heal his daughter; it was entirely another for Jairus to believe that Jesus could bring his daughter back from death. Yet Jesus told him simply and directly to “keep on believing.”

God, the one who gives us the gift of faith and all that is necessary for us to believe, is prompting Jarius to

use what God has given him. We know that nothing is too hard for the Lord. We can all say those words and our minds can assent to their plausibility. Still, believing requires more than our minds. Believing requires our hearts and our wills. Believing requires that our passions line up with the words we have said and the testimonies we have made. Believing requires submitting all that we are to the one who can transform us into a believing people of faith.

What obstacles are you facing in your walk with Jesus that require him to say to you, “only keep on believing?” Are you discouraged about your life? Do you fear for others? When Jairus cast himself at Jesus’ feet, Jesus took him up and carried him through to the end of his fears. Jairus would never again be the same. Jesus will do the same for you and for me. We must learn to depend on Jesus for the work of faith he wants to perform every day in our lives so we can keep on believing.

Prayer: Jesus, you are bigger than my unbelief. Build within me a heart of faith I believe help my unbelief. Amen.

Pastor Schultz

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

**Joy
of the
Lord**

**NO LIFE
IS WITHOUT
DIFFICULTIES
NO GARDEN
IS WITHOUT
WEEDS**

C.L. Fornari

Called to Serve and Celebrate Ministry Spiritual Gardening

Spring is in the air and the warmer days and gentle breezes turn our thoughts to gardening...our spring days are often filled with weeding, planting, watering, and more! Working in your garden - or even just planting a few flowers or plants in pots on your front porch - is the perfect opportunity to introduce some lessons to your children or grandchildren about spiritual growth (and do a little spiritual gardening).

Think about it! A growing plant is a very clear picture of how Christians grow in Christ. Jesus loved using nature and gardening illustrations in His parables...I think He would delight at using this educational lesson for kids! So gather some simple gardening supplies and spend an afternoon teaching and planting.

What three things does a plant need to grow and thrive? Water, sunlight, and soil, of course! Use these three items for success to the ingredients we need to have growth in our Christian life and don't forget to warn about the "weeds"!

SOIL...Plants need a good foundation of soil to start their growth. Just like a plant needs nutrient rich soil to thrive, Christ gives his children every possible nutrient we would ever need: Peace, Love, Encouragement & Wisdom...and His supplies are unlimited.

SUNLIGHT...The Bible is our sunlight. Plants grow towards the light. As children of God we should also lean towards the light. It can give us warmth and comfort in times of struggle and lead us on the clear

path in times of doubt. The Bible is a source of many things we need in our Christian life.

WATER...I like to think of that much needed water as fellowship with fellow believers. God didn't intend for us to grow alone, but to be there to encourage each other in Christ. Fellow believers are meant to come together, loving one another and supporting each other as we grow. Fellowship can be refreshing to a soul, just like water to a plant. It can help us perk up on a particularly draining day or quench a thirst.

DON'T FORGET THE WEEDS...Don't forget to warn your children about the "weeds" that can sprout up in our gardens, both in real life and in our spiritual life. Weeds come in all shapes, colors, and sizes, The worst weed in our spiritual gardens, Satan, can sometimes be easy to spot, while other weeds like wayward friends or feelings of bitterness and anger, can be hard to keep away.

Encourage your children and grandchildren to strengthen themselves with good soil (Christ), sunlight from above (His Word), and refreshing water (fellowship with fellow believers), so they may find themselves with strong roots that dig into their foundation, and a close spiritual walk with our Father.

Blessings,
Lorenza Robinson
Called to Serve & Celebrate Ministry

Worship Ministry

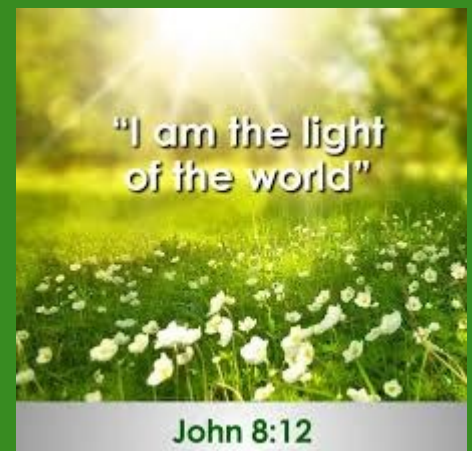
Let There Be Light - John 8:12

Christ's words, "I am the light of the world" touched on more than literal light and darkness. Christ and the prophets before Him used darkness and light to refer to the darkness of sin and the ignorance in which people were enveloped until He, the Light, came. By His birth, life, death and resurrection, Christ overwhelmed darkness and offered humanity the possibility of the light of life. The light for those of us who are led by the Spirit, to live under Jesus' redemptive brightness, to receive Him, to follow Him, and to reflect His brightness on all who sit in darkness created by sin and Satan. Their desperate cry and only hope, "Let there be Light."

We live in a world where national and international deeds of darkness seem endless as the media chronicles the darkness of our nations and hometowns. There is the darkness of terrorism, human rights, drugs, slander, abortion, and even ourselves. Many of us follow the false lights that lead to destruction. But Christ is the true Light, our only light. Spiritual darkness is a reality created by Satan. But what can we do? We should be self-controlled and alert. Our enemy, Satan, prowls like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.

As Christians, we believe that Christ is the Light of the world. God gave the first light when He gave the command saying, "Let there be light" and later the prophet Isaiah's reflection on the light of God says, "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the shadow of death a light has dawned." This Light whom Isaiah was referring to is Jesus and His salvation for mankind. He is the sinless, spotless Lamb of God, who gave His life for the sins of the world. Do we love Him? No! Men resist Him and prefer their sins to having Jesus as a Savior. Just as some creeping things scurry away from the light, so wicked men flee from the present of Christ. However, Christ as the redeemer of the world brings into His marvelous light all who languish lifeless in the dark. It is Christ that makes the proclamation, "I am the Light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." It is Christ who brings light and life – the Good News.

In His Peace,
Charles Craig
Worship Ministry Chair



Christ Care Ministry

I Love You, Jesus

The Pastor had just finished distributing the Lord's Supper. He spoke the words of dismissal, "*Depart in peace,*" when Fred, one of the communicants, with eyes focused on the cross whispered, "*Thank You, Jesus! Thank You, Jesus! I love You, Jesus!*" The Pastor later shared that beautiful experience with his wife. They talked about it for some time, especially the phrase, "*I love You, Jesus.*" We say to each other, "*I love you.*" We say to our children, "*We love you.*" Our children tell us that they love us. But what about, "*I love You, Jesus?*" Could He be waiting to hear us say that? Would He be pleased to hear those words from our hearts?

Our hymns are full of love. We sing of tender love, fervent, ineffable love. We sing of boundless, perfect, redeeming, wondrous love. We sing of amazing, holy, gracious love. We sing of creating, pardoning, patient, everlasting love. Furthermore, we sing that the Lord would teach us love; that He would crown our lives with love and keep us in His love. In our songs we ask that we would bring forth fruits of love; that we would be moved by His love; that we may give Him love.

Love is not a mere emotion, an idle feeling of sentiment. Rather, love is an active, working, principal, a motive power. Love is an action word. Ask a little child, "*How much do you love me?*" The child will immediately go into action. The bigger the hug, the harder the squeeze, the more the child is trying to express love.

So it was and is with the Lord our God. Note the words of action in *John 3:16*. "*God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son.*" Jesus did not love us and then stay in heaven. Because He loved us He **came** to planet earth and **gave** Himself a ransom for us all. He **made** the supreme sacrifice. He **paid** our debts.

- "*He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.*" -Isaiah 53:5
- "*Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down His life for His friends.*" -John 15:13
- "*Above all things, have fervent love among yourselves.*" -1 Peter 4:8
- "*By this shall all know that you are My disciples if you love one another.*" -John 8:35

No question about it, love is the badge of our faith.

"Thank You, Jesus! Thank You, Jesus! I love You, Jesus!"

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

Pastor Tom

President's Letter

The Spirit Works in Us and Through Us

"I will pour out a spirit of compassion and supplication." – Zechariah 12:10

When Christians begin to know Christ as their Lord and Savior through whom they are redeemed from death and brought into his kingdom and inheritance, their hearts are aglow with a flaming love of God, and they would gladly help everyone to the same experience. For they know no greater joy than that they possess and treasure . . . that they know Christ.

Therefore, they go out and teach and exhort other people, praising and testifying to it before everybody, praying and yearning that they too might attain to such grace. That is a restless spirit enjoying the highest rest in the peace of God. For it cannot be silent or idle but is always striving with all its power to spread the honor and glory of God among the people, that others too may receive this Spirit of grace and may then help with the work of prayer. For where the Spirit of grace is, it quickens our hearts so that we can and may and must begin to pray.

*Prayer: Holy Spirit, love divine, glow within our hearts; kindle every high desire; purge us with your holy fire.
Amen*

In His Peace,
Stan Weir
Congregational President

Taken from Luther's Sermon on John 14

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.

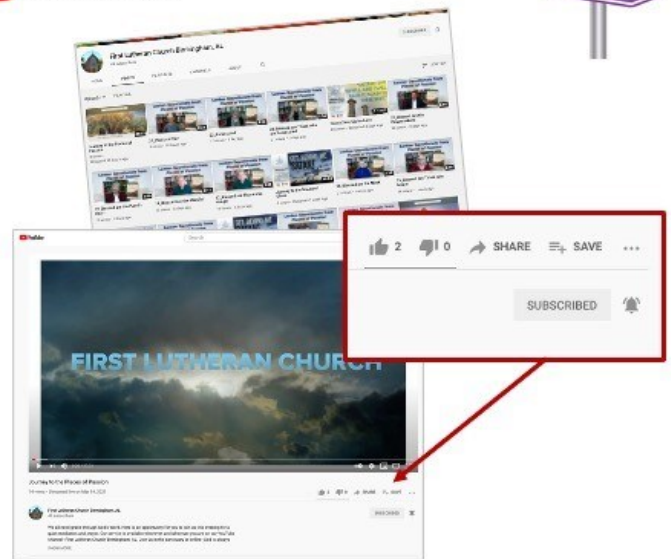
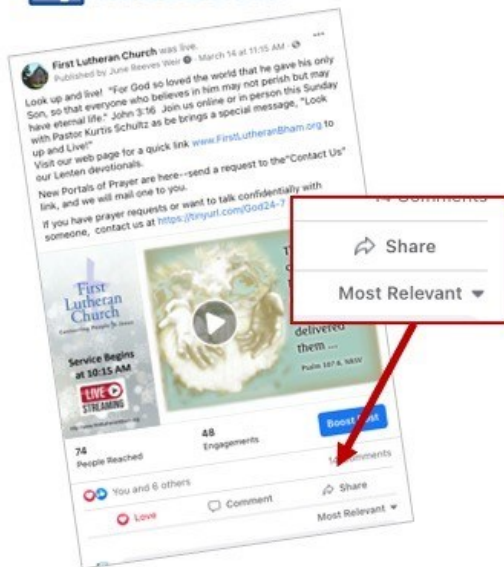
Call Committee Update

On May 20, Pastor Wayne Miller sent a letter to the congregation declining our call. He stated that he was impressed by the congregation but due to personal reasons, he felt he could not accept the call at this time. After receiving Pastor Miller's letter, the Call Committee met on May 22 and discussed our next steps. It was decided that the committee would recommend another pastor to the congregation from our current call list. The committee has asked the Board of Directors to schedule a meeting of the Voters Assembly in mid-June in order to issue a call to another pastor. Please watch for this announcement and plan to attend the meeting.

Glen Thompson

Call Committee Chairman

"Like and Share" the Love of Christ!



LWML News

Painting the Planet Purple with Servanthood

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

WHAT IS A FATHER?

He's strength, security, laughter and fun.
A prince to his daughter, a pal to his son.
A great story – teller and mender of toys.
Who's seldom dismayed by his family noise.
He's an everyday Santa who brings home gifts and surprises,
The man to consult when a problem arises.
As eager a worker as ever there'll be.
Who wants all the best for his whole family.
He's a loving instructor who struggles to teach,
His child to achieve all the goals one could reach.
And he knows in his heart that it's worth all the bother,
When he hears his child say "That man?" "That's my father!"
—Anonymous

As we give honor to our earthly fathers this month, we MUST remember our Heavenly Father.
Honor **HIM** with praise and worship each day, for **HE** is the TRUE and ULTIMATE Father.
There is NO ONE like HIM!

Today and always, we are surrounded by **HIS** grace and mercy. Serve the Lord with Gladness!

Sheree McGraw, President
First Lutheran Church LWML





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



6/3: Frances Robinson
6/15: Henry Mosley
6/21: June Weir
6/29: Rhonda Graham
6/30: Sean Golden



6/4: Ashley & TJ Mercer
6/17: Wendy & Shane Harris
6/28: Sheree & Anthony McGraw

Worship Team...June 2022

June 5

Pastor: Tony Ramsey
Worship Asst: Anthony McGraw
Reader: Eva Hill
Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris & Jay McGraw
Music: Larry Donaldson

June 19

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

June 12

Pastor: Tom Noon
Worship Asst: Charles Craig
Reader: Judy Drews
Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris & Jay McGraw
Music: Larry Donaldson

June 26

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



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 post-pandemic **MAN UP!** meetings.

