

FIRST Impressions

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A Publication of First Lutheran Church · Birmingham, AL

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First Lutheran Church

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Pastor's Pen Faith as the Bottom Line

"These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised." - Hebrews 11:39

The chapter in the book of Hebrews on "heroes of faith" is one of the best-known chapters of the New Testament. It is easy for me to read it and cheer at every line. Verses 29-35a give marvelous stories of how faith has won battles, ministered to kingdoms, resurrected the dead, and enabled daring escapes from almost certain death. This is the kind of faith that I like --- a faith that moves from victory to victory, a faith that

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Local Events

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

7/4: Thunder on the Mountain Fireworks Show, Atop Red Mountain; www.visitvulcan.com

7/4: Free 4th of July Band Concert, Bartow Arena Park

7/8-31: Summer Movie Series, Alabama Theatre; www.alabamatheatre.com/events

7/7-17: The World Games, various venues throughout Birmingham; www.twg2022.com

7/13—8/7: Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Cinderella*, Red Mountain Theatre; www.redmountaintheatre.com

7/28 - 8/7: STARS presents *Sister Act Jr.*, Virginia Samford Theatre; www.virginiasamfordtheatre.org



(cont'd from p. 1)

brings favorable results. This kind of faith is perfect for the SportsCenter highlight films, where all we see are game-winning pitches and decisive home-run swings.

The writer of Hebrews paints a fuller canvas about the life of faith. It is possible to be living a faith-filled life and not have these results. Starting with verse 35b, we see people who in faith were flogged, stoned, sawed in two, and subjected to lives of destitution. These people would not compromise their faith in order to escape earthly difficulties. On this earth they did not live “happily ever after.”

Hebrews presents an unflinching look at faith.

Sometimes faithful people suffer through the agony of a miscarriage. Faithful Christians lose jobs, get into car accidents, and struggle with debts. Our walk of faith is not always a simple equation of doing the right thing, and trusting in God, and always coming out on top. Jesus lived a perfect and holy life and died a hideous death on the cross. But God had something better planned for him in heaven. That’s part of faith: being willing to wait for the unseen blessing that may elude us here on this earth. This “something better” far outweighs any temporal trophy. May God grant us the wisdom to accept both earthly success and earthly difficulty.

Prayer: Lord God, help us to understand that faith may bring many different types of results on this earth. Give us grace cheerfully to accept all of life’s offerings. 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

Simple Things

simple things

Sometimes we get so caught up in life that we forget that we don't always have to be busy; we don't always need to be checking our email or rushing to the next thing. We need to remind ourselves that it's okay—and absolutely necessary—to slow it all down. To take a break and enjoy nature. To turn off the tv and simply be together. To enjoy a game of cards. To ask our kids what they're wondering about. To call our parents. To watch the sunrise. To enjoy the smell of a burning candle... We must never forget to enjoy the little things because they are never as little as we think.

- *Nikki Banas*

Blessings,

Lorenza Robinson

Called to Serve & Celebrate Ministry

Worship Ministry Reconciliation with God

There is the need for you and me to be reconciled to God because there has been a broken or a breached friendship in the relationship between God and man. It was sin that made the breach, a violation between God and man. The relationship was now broken and with sin in our hearts, we were filled with enmity and hostility against God, having no use for Him and causing Him to be justly offended with us as sinners. God loves us regardless of our sinfulness. Reconciliation occurs only when enemies become friends.

As the things of the world constantly change, we are seduced and enticed with the visible and tangible things to satisfy our needs for contentment, sometimes making them gods and not realizing that they only satisfy for a moment. It is God alone who ultimately satisfies our greatest needs for all that we are and all that we need. The apostle John tells us, “For everything in the world, the cravings of sinful man, the lust of the eyes, the boasting of what he does—comes not from the Father, but from the world.” What are we to do and how will we ever be reconciled to God with the many diversions confronting us? We are enabled by divine grace to live above the things of the world with Christ in our hearts and the world under our feet.

Consequently, how did we receive redemption and reconciliation? It was God who took the initiative in redemption and reconciliation. It is God that demonstrates his love for us in this: while we were still sinners Christ died for us. Peter tells us that in God’s great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. God appointed the Mediator of reconciliation and has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ. Moreover, when we are reconciled to God, our sins are forgiven and He does not impute or hold us accountable and has entered a new covenant. He freely forgives us of all our sins and justifies us freely by His grace to all who believe in Him.

In His Peace,
Charles Craig
Worship Ministry Chair

Christ Care Ministry

Tears of Relief and Little Glimpses of Heaven

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.”

- Matthew 7: 7-8.

Today in Europe, LCMS Missionaries are ministering to refugees who have been fleeing war-torn countries. Dr. Christian Tiews, LCMS Missionary to Germany, tells of one of his recent experiences. He met a Ukrainian mother and her teenage daughter at the train station in Hamburg. The husband/father had elected to stay behind to help defend the country. Tiews said he wasn't sure how to identify the woman, so he held up a homemade blue and yellow sign with their names.

“As the Lord would have it,” Tiews, said, “they disembarked right in front of me ... with tears of relief running down their faces after five days on the road.” Tiews said that he helped the women find their host and accompanied them to the host's vehicle.

“When we got there, I asked whether they would mind if we had a prayer of thanks for their safe arrival.” Tiews said the German host looked skeptical, saying, “praying is not really my thing.”

But the Ukrainians agreed, and Tiews prayed with the group, noting that after the prayer, the Ukrainians made the sign of the cross. The next day, Tiews said the women's host called to let him know they were doing well. Before hanging up, she added, “Thank you for praying last night. I'm not really into all that religion

stuff, but somehow praying to God felt good. It gave me peace.”

And so, beloved, isn't it comforting to see how prayer (and proclamation) can be answered in so many positive ways. Comforting tears of relief and joy for refugees and a moment of God's peace for “a not so religious person.” What a beautiful witness! God does indeed, give us little glimpses of heaven through prayer.

Prayer- *Father, send to us Your Holy Spirit every day to help us to ask, seek and knock so that we may find comfort in knowing Your presence and that the door to heaven is always open to us. Amen.*

Pax,

Pastor Tom

**** Paraphrased from The LCMS Response in Ukraine - Updates from Reporter - The Lutheran Witness - June/July 2022 edition.**

Summer Bucket List for Families

Summer is a great time for families to have fun, explore, and make memories together!

Many families don't know where to start, and then when they get to the end of summer, they wonder where it went and may feel like they didn't get to do everything they wanted to. Even though summer break is half over, there's still time for fun!

The link below will take you to a "Summer Bucket List for Your Family" and the free download includes activity ideas for families to use, including a fun faith prompt.

Help your family connect and grow this summer—and see where God shows up for you all season long.

Click below for your bucket list!



[Free Activity Download for Children's Ministry | Family Summer Bucket List \(childrensministry.com\)](https://childrensministry.com)

Summer Scammers

IRS Warns of Communications Scams

The IRS has recently issued a series of notices called their "Dirty Dozen" scams warning list. Number 7 on the list is suspicious communications designed to trick, surprise or scare you into responding before thinking. IRS officials are warning everyone to be on the lookout for bogus calls, texts, emails and online posts used to gain trust or steal.

Criminals have been using these methods for years and they continue because their ploys have worked well. Victims are tricked into providing sensitive personal financial data, money, or other information.

"If you're surprised or scared by a call or text, it's likely a scam so proceed with extreme caution," says IRS Commissioner Chuck Rettig. He adds that you should be sure to verify a suspicious email or other communication independently of the message in question.

To read the full notice, including a list of common scams the IRS continues to see, visit this link:

<https://bit.ly/3NNcW98>



Five in 50

Sunday June 5th's sermon for Pentecost Sunday encouraged us to tell all we meet about Jesus. This was the sole purpose for the coming of the Holy Spirit into the lives of God's people in early biblical times. Indeed, Jesus had promised during His stay with the disciples and other Christians of the early church that when He (Jesus) would leave them that the Comforter would come and this Comforter (the Holy Spirit) would explain all things to them. Those words "all things" meant that the early Christian would be provided with wisdom to understand the things of God. It would provide them with bravery to go forth and tell the Good News about Jesus, and it would work faith into the hearts of those who would hear and believe the Word.



We Christians of the church today have this same challenge and that is to share Jesus our friend with all those we encounter: Our relatives, our friends, our neighbors and those the Lord places in our paths.

Thus, the Pentecost sermon challenged the church members of First Lutheran to allow the power of the Holy Spirit to work in us to move us to go in the next 50 days from June 5th and tell at least five people about the love of Jesus. God gave us our marching orders thousands of years ago in Matthew 28:19-20. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things of whatsoever I have commanded you and lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (The New King James Version)

Rev. Dr. Tony Ramsey



Joy of the Lord

ENCOURAGEMENT & SUPPORT

You don't need to be aware of what others are doing. Applaud their efforts, acknowledge their successes, and encourage them in their pursuits. When we all help one another, everybody wins. May you always be blessed!

Call Committee Update

On June 12, the Voter's Assembly accepted the Call Committee's recommendation to extend a call to Pastor Matthew Gulseth. Pastor Gulseth is currently serving Concordia Lutheran Church in Pullman, Washington. He is a graduate of the University of Idaho with a B.S. in Conservation Social Science and a graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis with an M.Div. As a devoted follower of Jesus, he has been a presenter for Lutheran Hour Ministries, a Kern Fellow at the Acton Institute, and has acted on various boards and panel discussions. He currently serves as the President of the Board of Directors for Lutherhaven Ministries and is a Member of the Palouse Care Network Board of Directors. He enjoys camping, motorcycles, reading, and lawn care. Matt was born in Phoenix, AZ and raised in Spokane, WA as the second of three children. In Spokane, he met his wife Natalie at Redeemer Lutheran Church when he was a second-grader and she was a Kindergartner. After two decades of friendship, Matt and Natalie started dating and were married in 2010. They have two sons, Paul and Jack. Natalie has her B.S. in Education from Washington State and an M.Ed. from Concordia University in Portland, OR.

See Pastor Gulseth's letter of acknowledgement to our congregation on the following page. Pray that the Holy Spirit will guide his decision and that he will accept our call to be our next pastor.

Glen Thompson
Chairman of the Call Committee

5th Sunday Potluck Returns!

July 31

Bring a dish to share and join us in the fellowship hall after worship service on Sunday, July 31!





CONCORDIA

Lutheran Church
Preschool & University Ministry

Trinity Sunday, A.D. 2022
June 12, 2022

To the Saints of First Lutheran Church,

I am humbled and honored to have received a Divine Call from you these last days. Upon the receipt of these documents my family spent a moment in solemn prayer for God's church and for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I invite you to pray with me in the coming weeks as well. In my brief interview with your call committee, it is clear and apparent that you all earnestly desire to love and serve the Lord and I want to exhort you to remain steadfast in your faith and service to Him and one another.

My plan for deliberating this call is to spend the next three or so weeks in prayer and conversation. I plan to announce my decision to accept or return the call to First Lutheran Church on or about Sunday, July 3rd. The office of the Holy Ministry is a unique gift given by God to His church and as such, you are the ones entrusted with enlisting qualified men to accomplish His work. Because of this unique relationship I invite you to participate in this discernment process. Please email or call me regarding your thoughts at Matt.Gulseth@ConcordiaPullman.org or (509) 505-5324. Currently, due to extraordinary costs and other considerations we do not plan on visiting. This has been our family practice for past calls that have been extended to us.

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” (Colossians 3:16–17, ESV)

Again, I am humbled and honored. I look forward to our mutual discernment as we pursue Christ together.

In Christ,

Rev. Matthew Gulseth
Pastor, Concordia Lutheran Church

LWML News

Painting the Planet Purple with Servanthood

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

LWML History

Why Purple?

The official colors of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League are **PURPLE** and **GOLD**. According to the Southern Illinois *Lutheran Woman's Quarterly Supplement*, October 1948, the Southern Illinois district was the first to adopt the colors of **purple**, symbolizing royalty, and **gold**, symbolizing value and integrity.

The LWML Executive Board adopted **purple** and **gold** at their board meeting, held on July 24, 1951, at the Commodore Hotel New York, New York. The minutes of this meeting, state: "Motion was made by Mrs. Emil Frank to recommend that the colors of **purple** and **gold** as suggested in the Handbook, be adopted as the official League colors. Action – Adopted." This historical decision is noted on page 77 of *Wings* (c 1991).

LWML HISTORY BOOKS

(you can download or order the following books on the LWML website)

Women on a Mission (24MB) The role of women in the church from Bible times up to and including a history of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League during its first 25 years. Published 1967.

WINGS – Women IN God's Service (46MB) LWML in its first 50 years. 50th Anniversary History. Published 1991.

Women in League with the Lord (23MB) The story of Lutheran Women in Mission and Their Christian Predecessors. Published 2005.

New History Book! *Dedicated – Women Grounded in God's Word, Growing in God's Mission.*

Published 2019.

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



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.

Birthdays & Anniversaries



7/4: Beverly Halbrooks
7/5: Josephine Stallworth
7/28: E.J. Robinson



7/17: Marcy & Nelson Sharit

Worship Team...July 2022

July 3

Pastor: Kurtis Schultz
Worship Asst: Robert Regulus
Reader: Carol Lackey
Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris & Jay McGraw
Music: Larry Donaldson

July 10

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

July 17

Pastor: Tom Lackey
Worship Asst: Charles Craig
Reader: Robby Trione
Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris & Jay McGraw
Music: Becky Schultz

July 24

Pastor: Tony Ramsey
Worship Asst: Henry Mosley
Reader: Pat or Glen Thompson
Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris & Jay McGraw
Music: Larry Donaldson

July 31

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

