

FIRST Impressions

What's INSIDE

A Publication of First Lutheran Church • Birmingham, AL

- 1 Pastor's Pen
- 1 Church Calendar Link
- 1 Local Events
- 3 President's Letter
- 4 LCMS Online Conference
- 5 Worship Ministry
- 6 Called to Serve Ministry
- 7 Christ Care Ministry
- 8 Joy of the Lord
- 9 LWML Update
- 10 Advent Video Casting Call
- 11 Birthdays & Anniversaries
- 11 Worship Team



First

Lutheran Church

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Pastor's Pen Our Confidence is in the Lord

Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever. -Psalm 125:1

October brings to mind the Reformation, Dr. Martin Luther, and his courageous stand in the face of death for the truth of his faith. Many have wondered how one man could take such an immovable position in light of great opposition. Surely, knowing the answer could have an impact on our individual and corporate life.

Continued on page 2

Local Events

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

Through 10/2: Antiques in the Gardens, Birmingham Botanical Gardens; www.bbgardens.org

10/9: 9th Annual CahabaQue, Cahaba Brewing Company; www.cahababrewing.com

10/11: Bach's Musical Offering, Samford University Brock Recital Hall; www.alabamasymphony.org

10/13-15: Birmingham Greek Festival, Holy Trinity-Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Cathedral; www.birminghamgreekfestival.net

10/29: Magic City Classic, Legion Field; www.magiccityclassic.com

10/30: *Phantom of the Opera*, Alabama Theatre; www.alabamatheatre.com



(cont'd from p. 1)

It is in this light we focus on the amazing words of the Psalmist. It says that those who put their confidence in the Lord, who truly believe in him and live in this assurance, are like Mount Zion. It doesn't say they should be or will be like Mount Zion, but they are like Mount Zion. In God's sight it is already true.

They are said to be like Mount Zion in two specific ways: 1) they cannot be moved, and 2) they abide forever. A mountain is the epitome of an object that cannot be moved. When Jesus wanted to illustrate something that was humanly impossible, He spoke of moving mountains. Mount Zion was particularly immovable because it was surrounded by other mountains.

Trust in the Lord and his never-ending grace similarly makes a Christian secure, solid, and steady so that nothing can shake him or her. We need not be threatened by the difficult circumstances of life, the sudden changes brought on by tragedy or even natural disaster. Our confidence in God can be that strong. This is especially so if we are part of a group of Christians who trust in the Lord together.

Furthermore, the cross of Jesus Christ proclaims that we will abide forever with the Lord. Our security is not in this life only, but even more in the life that is to come, when our trust will turn to sight and we shall live in his presence forever.

Any mountain would have been sufficient to give this sense of security, but this is Mount Zion. This is "his holy mountain, beautiful in elevation, the joy of all the earth" (Psalm 48:2). This is Mount Zion, "the city of the great King." It is his dwelling place. We are secure

because "the great King" lives in and among us.

Through our trust in the Lord we can be individually and corporately lifted up to be the joy of the whole earth.

Again, in Revelation, just when Satan appears to have taken over the whole earth, the spotlight of heaven suddenly swings around and there on Mount Zion stands the victorious Lamb surrounded by the armies of heaven (Revelation 14:1). Mount Zion is where God reveals his overcoming power. It is where Jesus stands ready to accomplish the ultimate victory. If we are "like Mount Zion" then we are the place where Jesus' victory is secure and where He stands, awaiting the time of His unveiling to the world. This is truly an amazing statement.

Now and again, we need to be reminded of who God is, what he has done for us, is doing for us, and will do for us, and how confident we can be in him. No wonder Peter writes, "the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself establish, strengthen, and settle you" (I Peter 5:10).

Prayer: Thank you, Father, that in Jesus you will never fail us nor forsake us. Amen

In His Peace,
Pastor Schultz

From the President

Over the past three years we have endured the Covid pandemic and have survived. We owe a lot of gratitude to the previous Board of Directors for their leadership through this crisis. Please let them know that you appreciate their leadership.

The 2022-2024 Board of Directors was installed on September 10 and met on September 19 to assess where our ministry is at this time and to develop plans for the future. The Board agreed that the following four items were our most pressing concerns: filling the pastoral vacancy, internal and external ministry, property management, and administrative support.

The Board plans to address these issues as follows:

1. **Pastoral vacancy** – The congregation has been blessed to have five retired ministers who have been willing to dedicate ongoing time to handle our pastoral duties. None of these men want to be a full-time pastor so we must continue to look for a full-time shepherd of the congregation. The Call Committee is committed to finding a pastor that would be a good match with our congregation. We must continue to pray for them and support their efforts. The Call Committee has contacted the seminaries about interviewing and ranking 2023 graduates. The committee has also asked for more candidates from the Southern District President, Eric Johnson.
2. **Ministry** – Covid severely affected our outreach programs and our internal faith growth programs (Tuesday women's Bible study, Wednesday evening Bible study, Sunday School, and fellowship activities). The Board is very thankful for the ways that we were able to maintain Sunday corporate worship and the development of the online broadcast ministry. We must now work to get people involved in faith nourishing activities such as Bible study and small group activities. We must develop "fruits of the spirit" activities which should be community-oriented projects that are doable by a limited number of participants in a relatively short period of time. These projects should have a fellowship component incorporated in them. We need to be aware of the culture and environment around us and see where we can invest our limited resources to have the greatest impact. Wendy Harris has agreed to lead developing Bible study opportunities and Lorenza Robinson has agreed to spearhead our outreach programs. The Board recognized that UAB is a potential ministry for the church. Robert Regulus has agreed to lead a committee to study what this ministry might be and make recommendations to the Board.

Continued on p. 4

(cont'd from p. 3)

3. Property Management – Stan Weir and Larry Donaldson have done an outstanding job of managing the facilities over the past three years. Our facility is over 70 years old and it suffers from its' age. The facility is what those outside the church see and initially use to make judgements about us. It is imperative that we be good stewards of our facility and keep it in a God pleasing form. Stan Weir has agreed to continue his role as Property Manager and has developed a list of issues that need to be addressed.

4. Administrative Support – When we call another pastor and he accepts our call, we will need to provide administrative support to him. Currently volunteers are providing this support on a weekly basis. We need to determine how much support a pastor will need and how we can provide it. Robert Regulus will be leading a committee to resolve this issue.

The Board has taken the first step in developing goals and expectations for the next two years. Please consider where you can participate in the ministry and reach out to those people in leadership and offer to help. At minimum everyone should be involved in Bible study, corporate worship, and praying for God's blessings on our efforts.

Glen Thompson
President

Making
Disciples
for Life



LET US KEEP
AWAKE

1 THESS. 5:6

You're invited to join us October 10-12 for the LCMS online conference "Making Disciples for Life." We are making this conference available in our fellowship hall free of charge. Breakout sessions will be decided by those attending. All breakout sessions will be available online for 60 days.

For the full agenda, [CLICK HERE](#). There are drop-down descriptions and presenter information.

If you wish to attend some or all of the sessions on your own, please [CLICK HERE](#) to register.

Worship Ministry

Submit Yourself to God - James 4:1-7

Each of us are confronted with different circumstances that impact our lives as we make decisions. Decisions come as we interact with people, the environment, and the world we live. Of course, there is good and evil in all phases of our lives. And because of our weakness as humans, we are prone to do things which are not in keeping with God's desires for us as Christians. Even with our best intentions, we sometimes stray away from the path of God's righteousness, mercy, and salvation and become double-minded evildoers. Our personalities hardened and insensitive to our brothers in Christ. We too as Christians struggle with sin and are even tempted to present ourselves holier than others. We seem to be unable to focus on God's love or righteousness becoming insensitive to the needs of our neighbors and friends and seek to destroy others without listening to our conscience.

Moreover, why do we do things that are evil in the sight of God? Could it be self-gratification or to gain approval from someone or group? We hear this in business and politics. Looking at slanders for instance, especially in political campaigns where one or both may say things which are not true. Is this the type of behavior that our Lord desires of us? No, we say that talk is cheap, but is it? The Greek poet Homer speaks of slander as winged words; words that fly like darts, and until we open our mouths, these words stay within us, but once our mouths are opened these words like darts fly and can wound the person these were words aimed toward.

On the other hand, we must submit ourselves to God. Jesus tells us in Matthew 12:36 "...men will have to give account on the day of judgement for every careless word they have spoken." And in verse 37, He states, "For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned." What we should do is love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

In His Peace,
Charles Craig
Worship Ministry Chair

Called to Serve and Celebrate Ministry Absence Makes the Heart . . .

These are unprecedented times, filled with uncertainty and fear. The way we meet together as a church has changed, but we will persevere. Because the Church is not a building. It is not brick and mortar. It is the Body of Christ. It is all of us, honoring God, no matter our circumstance. Any place, any time, any day...We are still the Church!



When we hear a sermon and even interact with other church members...today it is often done so from the comfort of our couch, without having to dress up or change clothes, and not even having to speak to each other except through our computers.

But what hasn't changed!? In all the important ways, nothing has changed. We are still the people of God, gathering in the presence of God, to bring glory to God. We still affirm his righteous rule by living under his command. We still love one another with the same love with which the Father loved the Son, and we still testify to the truth and power of the gospel.

God's people have gathered to worship in all kinds of situations...many of them less than ideal. They worshipped together as slaves in Egypt and exiles in Babylon, as wanderers in the wilderness and as objects of Roman persecution. The church in this pandemic joins their faithful company. We may be six feet apart, but we still are the church.

We will once again gather in person as a church body, gathering to hear and be encouraged by a sermon and to even interact with other church members. When we do once again gather in person, Christ has promised that he will be present with us.

Blessings,
Lorenza Robinson
Called to Serve & Celebrate Ministry



Christ Care Ministry

Never Alone

“My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Why are You so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry by day, but You do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest.”

- Psalm 22: 1-2

Tradition says that as Jesus hung from the cross, He prayed all the Psalms. The one that is most often associated with Jesus' crucifixion is Psalm 22. Jesus prayed these words because He exemplified what is meant to suffer. Not only was He tortured and crucified, but He was suffering physically while bearing the sin of the whole world. However, suffering did not have the final say; it is not the end result. As Jesus Himself declared to the downtrodden Emmaus disciples, *“Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?”* (Luke 24:26). Suffering must come before glory, both for Christ and for you.

Being part of the Body of Christ through Holy Baptism, you are not your own. You belong to Christ. You reside in His body. Now, in your own suffering, you are joined to the suffering of Christ. Like Him, your end will not be your suffering, but the glory of eternal life. Moreover, since He has done His part, God will not forsake you. He is not far from saving you. He does indeed answer you. In Christ, you are accompanied now as you suffer, and at the appointed time, you will be delivered into everlasting glory.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, in Your suffering You showed us the way to everlasting life. In our suffering, show us Your mercy and Your healing, and point us to that final healing where we will join You and the Father with the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

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

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

Joy of the Lord



EVEN FROM SIX FEET APART,
I'LL TEACH YOU WITH ALL OF MY HEART.

5th Sunday Potluck

October 30



Bring a dish to share and join
us in the fellowship hall after
worship service on
Sunday, October 30!

LWML News

Painting the Planet **Purple** with Servanthood

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

October 9 - LWML Sunday:

For Us and With Us (*Romans 8:31-39*)

Join the ladies of First Lutheran as we celebrate LWML Sunday on October 9 with the theme “For Us and With Us,” based on Paul’s letter to the Romans. Paul tells us that each of us has faced challenges and circumstances greater than our own strength (Romans 8:31-39). In Christ, who is for us and with us, we are already more than conquerors through Him who loved us. This celebratory LWML Sunday will encourage all hearers of the victory which is already ours through Baptism, so we might live each day confidently trusting in Christ.



Save the Date:

Zone 2 LWML Fall Rally

When: Saturday, November 12, 2022

Where: First Lutheran Church (B’ham)

More information to come.

Please continue to keep both events in your prayers. Thank you for your support. Continue to stay safe and well. Be blessed and a blessing to others.

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

Serve the LORD with gladness.

Sheree McGraw, President

First Lutheran Church LWML



Casting Call for Advent Video Devotionals

Share the Love of Christ!

Did you know that our 2022 Lenten Devotionals reached **over 12,700 viewers??**

Join our adult and children outreach as we share quick devotionals from Chad Bird and David Mead from their latest collections:

Be Born in Us Today

As we look toward the physical birth of our Savior, Jesus, we are reminded in these devotions for Advent that Christ is born in us spiritually today and every day.

The Adverbs of Advent

Throughout the season of Advent, children will happily use adverbs to learn HOW God planned to save all people.

- Do you want to participate in our **Advent 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



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



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

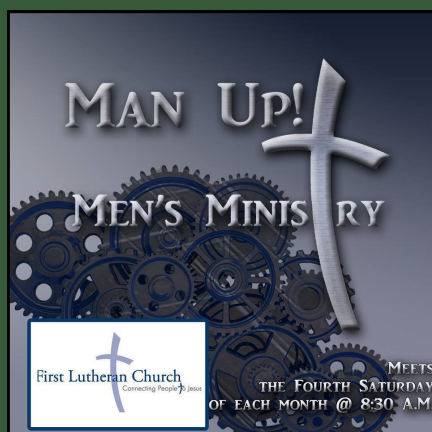
Stan Weir

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



10/5: Judy Drews
10/9: Wendy Harris
10/9: Tim Shiflett
10/10: Robert Regulus
10/12: Jennie Kilbourne
10/16: Elise Robinson
10/22: Ernestine Craig
10/22: Torrey Crenshaw
10/23: Cynthia Brown
10/29: Judy Brown

10/4: Frances & Lorenza Robinson

Worship Team...October 2022

October 2

Pastor: Kurtis Schultz
Worship Asst: Henry Mosley
Reader: Sheree McGraw
Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris & Jay McGraw
Music: Larry Donaldson

October 23

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

October 9

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

October 23

Pastor: George Murdaugh
Worship Asst: Charles Craig
Reader: Pat or Glen Thompson
Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris & Jay McGraw
Music: Larry Donaldson

October 16

Pastor: Tom Lackey
Worship Asst: Robert Regulus
Reader: Frances Foy
Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris & Jay McGraw
Music: Becky Schultz

