

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 Called to Serve Ministry
- 5 Worship Ministry
- 6 Christ Care Ministry
- 7 Joy of the Lord
- 7 Selma Tornado Relief
- 8 Neighborhood Yard Sale
- 8 Evening Prayer
- 9 Birthdays & Anniversaries
- 9 Worship Team



First Lutheran Church
2507 Highland Avenue
Birmingham, AL 35205
205.933.0380

www.firstlutheranbham.org

[View our Church Calendar](#)



Pastor's Pen A Psalm for All Seasons

[Jesus said,] "I am the good shepherd." (John 10:11a)

This month's Scripture readings continue to echo the great themes of Jesus' Passion, as God's people continue their pilgrimage from the feast of Easter to the outpouring of God's Spirit at Pentecost. What a joyous time of the year, as the church continues to celebrate Christ's victory over sin and death! This psalm is the focus of our thoughts today.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. What a grand introduction to all

Continued on page 2

Local Events

Saturdays: Pepper Place Market; www.pepperplacemarket.com

Through 6/17: Birmingham Stallions Football, Protective Life Stadium; www.theusfl.com

Through 6/25: Light Play, Birmingham Museum of Art; www.artsbma.org

5/7: Birmingham Taco Fest, Sloss Furnaces; www.barehandsinc.org/taco-fest-2023

5/12: Lucinda Williams and Her Band, Lyric Theater; www.lyricbham.com

5/13: Magic City Wine Fest, Railroad Park; www.magiccitywinefest.com

5/18: Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*; Avon Theater; www.alabamasymphony.org

5/26-28: Symphony in the Summer, Railroad Park; www.alabamasymphony.org

5/27: 12th Annual Salsa Showdown, Cahaba Brewing Company; www..sidewalkfest.com/get-involved/salsa-showdown



(Pastor's Pen - cont'd from p. 1)

that follows! Because Jesus is our shepherd, we have at this moment, and will have for the rest of our days, everything we will need. There are times when we should stop and rest with him, but will not want to. At such periods, he will, in effect, make us to lie down in green pastures. When we do recognize our need for quiet and rest, his promise is that he will lead us beside the still waters. At other times we undergo deep emotional hurts, injuries to our very selves. While such wounds may be beyond the reach of psychotherapy and counseling, there is one who can heal us: He restoreth my soul.

In a world of conflicting direction about the right path to take, Jesus has promised his Spirit, who will lead us into all truth (John 16:13). He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Some claim they are unable to hear God. It has been the experience of many that a willingness to do whatever he wants enables them to discern his leading.

Suffering and periods of darkness are a part of every life. We have his promise: Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me. "Jesus is there with me." At the darkest time of my life this verse proved true. I found the Lord in a person-to-person relationship that has now grown only deeper. I know nothing now can separate me from him.

Protected from enemies by his rod and guided by his staff, surely our heads are anointed and our cups overflowing. His goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives, and we will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. Or, as another translation promises, His house will be our home forever.

Shepherd of our souls, guide us safely through the joys and trials of this life, until we are gathered to you in the safety of our home on high. Amen.

In His Peace,
Pastor Schultz



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

From the President

On April 11, the congregation received a response from Pastor Wayne Miller concerning the call that we extended to him on February 19. Unfortunately, he has declined the call. A copy of his communication to the congregation is included below.

We are thankful that Pastor Miller prayerfully considered our call and that he took time to let the Holy Spirit guide him. The Call Committee is continuing to seek the Holy Spirit's guidance. We know that in God's time a shepherd that he has chosen for us will be revealed. Until that time, the church will continue to strive to expand God's kingdom with the tools and resources that he has provided to us. We are blessed to have an active ministry. We should remember that we are called to ministry and even to minister to each other. We are called to minister in all kinds of different ways so that the gospel can be proclaimed, the kingdom can be built, and God can be glorified – it is the calling of God.

I pray daily that God will bless us and strengthen our faith. I look forward to what God has in store for our congregation.

Peace be with you,

Glen Thompson
Congregational President
Call Committee Chairman

Pastor Miller's Letter read as follows:

Dear Members of First Lutheran,

Christ is Risen! He is Risen, Indeed! Alleluia!

These past 7 weeks were the most humbling, emotional, and difficult experience of my ministry. Seven weeks is the longest I've taken with a call partly because of Lent and logistics but mostly because you are a desirable call for me. What an honor to be called as your pastor twice. After serious reconsideration and many tears, I must decline again. This is not a rejection of you nor a rejection of our call process, but an emotional journey guided only by the Holy Spirit. It's unfortunate that I have no words to explain other than being a God thing. The people that God has placed in my life professionally and personally have helped me a little with this decision but it's really the Holy Spirit who has said no.

I hate the fact that I had to reject you twice because there is a desire to serve you too, but this is where the Holy Spirit has led me. It was once again difficult and I'm so sorry if I have wasted any time or resources for First Lutheran in receiving a

(cont'd on p. 4)

(From the President - cont'd from p. 3)

pastor. Please forgive me. I wish I can help you move forward so here is some benefit: Being that you called me twice, you were not confident I made the correct decision 10 months ago and truthfully, I wasn't either. But now after 2 calls, we can be 100% certain that I am not your pastor.

This should bring peace, not distress. This should open for you another path, not close you off. You are in my prayers all the time. God be with you. What great men and women you have serving the church. Keep up the good work! The Good Shepherd lives, and He continues to guide you for His purpose and will. May He bless all our ministries.

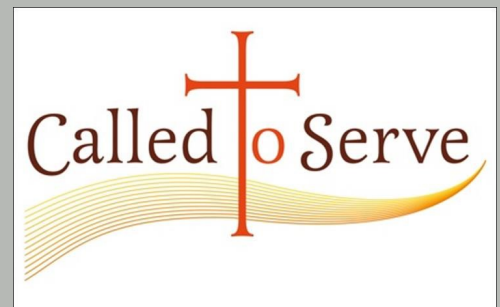
*Yours in Christ,
Pastor Wayne Miller*

Called to Serve and Celebrate Ministry Quiet Servants

At the time of the Haitian earthquake in 2010, hundreds of missionaries were on the island. Did you know any of them? Probably not. They were anonymous mostly, known only to a few. Nevertheless, they were faithful souls who gave God their private and public lives. In every congregation there are quiet servants of the Lord, who rather anonymously go about their duty to God and humankind, giving of their time and talent to their church. There are more than a few such quiet, faithful souls who take seriously the teaching of Jesus. Someone wrote “of the plain heroic breed that loved Heaven’s silence more than fame.” They are indeed all about us. Anonymous followers perhaps, living faithful, almost hidden lives, but like numerous Johnny Appleseeds, casting seeds wherever they go. Seeds of love and hope and joy without which any church cannot exist, nor the church fulfill its mission. There are many of those saints at First Lutheran who are “the plain heroic breed that love Heaven’s silence more than fame.” We are thankful for them.

Lorenza Robinson

Called to Serve & Celebrate Ministry



Worship Ministry

Who is Your Shepherd?

Psalm 23

“The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want...”
- Psalm 23:1

This psalm is a psalm of thanksgiving describing a situation of distress and how God delivers David and you and me. How wonderful that our Shepherd does not withhold his blessings from us, but still cares for our needs and more. As people in the world, we know who our leaders are and what they might do for us as citizens. Usually, it is about what they claim to be able to accomplish through their leadership. You might say that our leaders are shepherds. But how often do we think about what our Lord and Father, the Good Shepherd has done for us and continues to do without anything from us?

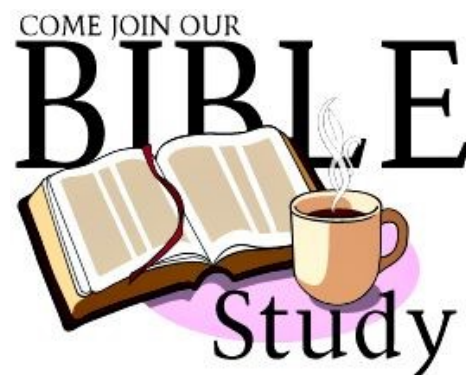
On the other hand, in Psalm 23 David describes the Lord as a shepherd. Although David had been a shepherd of his father’s sheep, he had also been a leader of men. He compared himself to a sheep that has a faithful shepherd (leader) that leads him. He recognized the Lord God as his Shepherd. The good shepherd leads (guides) us in the path of righteousness—to safety offering safety and well-being. He reassures and comforts us and seeks us when we go astray. He is our sustainer and protector. The Good Shepherd provides lovingly everything that we need in this life, but we often fail to recognize these gifts that come from him. We tend to focus on the things we want, yet our Lord, our Shepherd does not withhold His blessings from us. He gave us His own Son. How often do we think of the Lord as the Good Shepherd and we as his sheep?

In His Peace,
Charles Craig
Worship Ministry Chair

Bible Study Opportunities

- **Wednesday Evenings (via Zoom) - 5:30 p.m.**
- **Saturday Mornings (via Zoom) - 8:00 a.m.**
- **Sunday Mornings (in person at First Lutheran) - 9:00 a.m.**

If you are interested in participating in one of the Zoom studies, please email Pastor George Murdaugh at georgeearl@hotmail.com.



Christ Care Ministry

When Struggling to Keep the Faith

Just recently I read about an individual who was a pottery maker by profession. Needless to say, this individual sees broken shards of pottery on a daily basis. Being a struggling person of faith, he shared how we are so much like those broken shards ... and how God picks up the pieces and puts us back together, renewed and refreshed. Scripture helps so very much when I look at myself and the whole world and can't help but feel like one of those small broken shards of pottery. Faith and happiness, like broken pieces, seem so shattered at times. Here are *but a few verses* of the many that warm my soul. Perhaps, they will warm your soul too.


“Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen” (Hebrews 11:1). “For we walk by faith and not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7). “Blessed are they who trust in the Lord, who do not turn to the proud and go astray after a lie” (Psalm 40:4). “Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness. . . Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him, and He will act” (Psalm 37: 3-5). “Have I not commanded you? Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:9). “Fear not I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand” (Isaiah 41:10). “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God” (Philippians 4:6).

Trust is faith. The stronger the trust, the stronger the faith. Scriptures are literally filled with the admonition to trust, to have faith, to cling to God's promises, to rest in them, and therein to have peace. God created each one of us to be in a relationship of trust with Him. His desire for our trust is that of the One Perfect Parent who does not want any one of us to doubt His care and purposes for us. Yes, life can give us colossal challenges and wreak havoc, making ordinary living all but impossible. But there is another and greater reality and that is the presence and promises of our Father God who pleads with us His children, saying, “*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths*” (Proverbs 3:5-6). And HE will, beloved. We are not ignored. God is faithful. His love and mercy have neither beginning nor ending.

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

Pastor Tom

Joy of the Lord



Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

1 PETER 4:10

Selma Tornado Response

The Southern District LCMS has established a disaster response center at Trinity Lutheran Church in Selma AL. Two response ministries will be working to serve those affected by the recent tornadoes in that area.

If you wish to volunteer, you may do so by contacting Shepherds Heart Disaster Response Ministry (www.facebook.com/ShepherdsHeartMinistry) or Forged by Fire Services (www.facebook.com/ForgedByFireServices).

If you'd like to directly support them with donations, you can send a designated gift to them through First Lutheran Church (www.firstlutheranbham.org).

Neighborhood Yard Sale April 29

One Man's Trash is Another Man's Treasure!

Please come check out First Lutheran's neighborhood yard sale April 29 from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. Several families are participating, so there should be plenty of treasures for you to choose from. Be sure to tell all your bargain-loving friends too! If you'd like to volunteer on the day of the sale, contact Wendy Harris at 205-706-9229.



The families who are selling their items all donated a participation fee which will go to One Roof, the coordinating agency for the homeless Continuum of Care of Central Alabama. Read more about their mission [HERE](#).

**Join us on the Second Sunday
of the month at 5:00PM for**

Evening Prayer

✝ ENTER IN SILENCE ✝

✝ WORSHIP PRAYERFULLY ✝

✝ DEPART IN PEACE ✝





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

BROADCAST
June Weir

FIRST IMPRESSIONS EDITOR

Birthdays & Anniversaries



5/1: Margaret Golden
5/5: Mali Mathru
5/12: Dorothy Sims
5/17: James Melton
5/17: Kelsey Washington
5/18: Charlie Hayes
5/28: Sophia Rotton

**No May Anniversaries
on Record**

Worship Team...May 2023

May 7

Pastor: Tom Noon
Worship Asst: Glen Thompson
Reader: Rebeca Jensen
Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris &
James McGraw
Music: Larry Donaldson

May 21

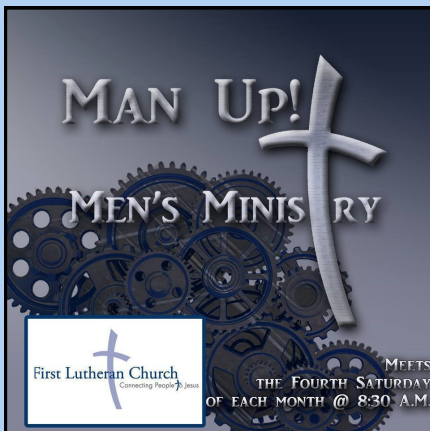
Pastor: Tom Lackey
Worship Asst: Anthony McGraw
Reader: Henry Mosley
Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris &
James McGraw
Music: Becky Schultz

May 14

Pastor: George Murdaugh
Worship Asst: Robert Regulus
Reader: Pat or Glen Thompson
Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris &
James McGraw
Music: Larry Donaldson

May 28

Pastor: Tony Ramsey
Worship Asst: Charles Craig
Reader: Carol Lackey
Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris &
James 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 post-pandemic
MAN UP! meetings.**

