

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 God is Able

"He (Abraham) grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what He had promised." (Romans 4:20-b21)

Two thousand years after his death, Abraham was remembered as a man of faith, "fully convinced God was able to do what He had promised." It was not that he was perfect that he was remembered. In fact, Genesis records that he was very human. For instance, when God told him to leave his family and travel to a far land, he disobeyed and took his nephew Lot. Later he paid the price for that decision. Yet his mistakes were not counted against him, and

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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

6/2-4: Alabama Ballet presents Coppélia, DJD Theater at Alabama School of Fine Arts; www.alabamaballet.org

6/2-25: Shrek the Musical, Red Mountain Theatre; www.redmountaintheatre.org

6/4: Vulcan's 119th Birthday Bash, Vulcan Park & Museum; www.visitvulcan.com

6/5 - 7/21: BMA Summer Art Camps, Birmingham Museum of Art; www.artsbma.org

6/15 - 7/2: Peter Pan the Musical, Virginia Samford Theatre; www.virginiasamfordtheatre.org

6/16-17: Steel City Smooth Jazz Festival, Linn Park; www.steelcityjazzfest.org



God was faithful to His promises in spite of Abraham's weaknesses.

The emphasis of the Scripture is on God's faithfulness. Their testimonies constitute the evidence and encouragement we need to build our faith. In spite of incredible odds, impossible situations, and physical impossibilities, God honored His promises to Abraham. He gave him the land, and made him a great nation, and he has become a blessing unto generations. God is God, and He is faithful.

God is not limited by natural law, nor by traditionally accepted religious law. The Pharisees are appalled that Jesus would deign to eat with tax collectors and sinners. No self-respecting rabbi would tarnish his reputation by socializing with the outcasts of society. Yet Jesus is being faithful to His promise made in Nazareth when He read from Isaiah in the synagogue that He would preach to the poor, proclaim release to the captives, and set at liberty those who are oppressed.

He went with the ruler to attend to his daughter even though the distraught father reported to Him that she was already dead. That father believed in a physical impossibility, and Jesus was faithful to that belief. It says in Matthew that the people laughed at Jesus. They must have thought the father was absolutely crazy. Think of the consequences if the father had succumbed to public opinion and Jesus had been sensitive to ridicule from people.

Along the way a woman who had been ill for twelve years physically weak, emotionally drained, and spiritually discouraged reached out in faith, "fully convinced that He would do what he had promised," and touched his garment. Jesus sensed her presence, turned, spoke to her, and she was healed, body, soul, and spirit.

When discouragement strangles enthusiasm, and hopes are dashed by lack of faith, we need not tumble into the depths of despair. We have testimony, that God is faithful to His promises. He is faithful to His people, and we can exercise our faith in Him (though it might be the size of a mustard seed), and He will be there.

Prayer: Great is Thy Faithfulness O God my Father, There is no shadow of turning with Thee; Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not; As Thou has been Thou forever wilt be. (Thomas O. Chisholm)

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

After Pastor Miller declined our second call to him, the call committee met and discussed whether there were any other candidates from our previous call lists or currently in the field who would be a good match for the congregation. We identified and contacted one pastor from the list but he stated he would not be available any time within the foreseeable future. We identified another pastor in the field, but he has more than 20 years of experience and was beyond the compensation parameters the congregation had approved. We contacted Southern District President Johnson and asked him to prepare another call list for the church. He responded quickly that he would work on the list but did not believe that he could find any candidates for us with 5 years or less of experience.

Following President Johnson's response, the church council and call committee met jointly to discuss alternatives and develop a plan to call and support a new pastor. Currently tithes and offerings are such that we can support a pastor with 5 years of experience. The church has set aside \$50,000 as a pastoral support fund to buffer any seasonal short falls in giving. We discussed in the meeting that as long as our pastor's position is open, we can use these funds to increase the pastoral support fund. The group decided that we can increase the fund to \$100,000 and use this fund as a buffer to broaden the search for a pastor with more experience. We sent following email to President Johnson on April 27:

President Johnson, thank you for your counsel on calling a pastor with 5 years of experience. A joint meeting of the church council and the call committee was held on April 26 to discuss your email and to discuss plans for the future. It was discussed that our current budget could support a pastor with 5 years of experience now and into the foreseeable future. The group understands that if we go beyond a pastor with 5 years of experience our current offerings would not be able to sustain the ministry unless growth occurred. The group believes we can prefund a pastor by setting aside money that can be accessed as needed to manage any short falls. We believe that with existing savings from our pastoral vacancy, we could support someone with as much as 15 years of experience for at least 5 years. We will continue to save an additional \$8,000 per month as long as our position is vacant. In 5 months, we could support a pastor with 23 years of experience for 5 years and in 10 months we could support a pastor with 35 years of experience for 5 years.

Only God knows who he has chosen for us to be our shepherd and we cannot place limits on God's resources. We ask as you prayerfully seek God's direction and guidance as you prepare our call list that He will match us

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to someone who will guide our ministry to the results that He desires. We rest in the assurance that He will provide the resources to accomplish His mission. We look forward with anticipation to see the marvelous works of our God.

In Christ's service,
Glen Thompson
Congregational President and Call Committee Chairman

Called to Serve and Celebrate Ministry

The growing of a bountiful crop of peas requires not only hard work, but also careful planning. Before Farmer Brown gathers his harvest, there are several things he must do. The Apostle Paul was not a farmer, but he outlined a program of stewardship that might be compared to Farmer Brown's rows of peas. In I Corinthians 16:2, he said that our stewardship should be:

Periodic: "Upon the first day of the week..." What better time to reflect upon our blessings than the day set aside for worship.

Personal: "let each of you..." Stewardship is an individual matter. Each of us has both the opportunity and the responsibility of being good stewards.

Provident: "lay by him in store..." Using all that God blesses us with is not wise stewardship. We should honor God first, not last. Taking God's portion out first keeps us from spending all that we have and then thinking about God.

Proportionate: "...as he may prosper..." God never requires a set amount. Instead, we are to recognize God's blessings, and then give as we have been blessed. If God required a certain amount, many could not give it.

Preventive: "...that no collection be made when I come." If everyone gave, there would always be sufficient funds to meet every need. Nothing would be left undone. There would be no need for special offerings, mission offerings, etc. The treasury would run over.

Following the Apostle Paul's plan of church finance will bring in a great harvest. His five rows of "P's" will produce a fine crop year after year if each member will practice his kind of farming.

Lorenza Robinson
Called to Serve & Celebrate Ministry



Worship Ministry

Boasting in Christ - 1 Corinthians 1:21-31

There is neither foolishness nor weakness with God. What seems to be foolishness on God's part, in the eyes of men, is wiser than man at his best. What seems to be the weakness on God's part, in the eyes of man, turns out to be stronger than man can produce. However, Paul's purposes for writing letters to the Church at Corinth was to instruct and to restore the church in areas of weakness, correcting erroneous practices such as division and immorality.

Having spoken of the Gospel, Paul turns to the people whom God calls by the Gospel. He reminds them that not many are wise according to the flesh, not many are mighty, not many are noble are called by God. It has often been pointed out that the text does not say "not any" but not many and we emphasize "not many." It is neither pride of intellect nor civic position or prestige that accounts in the eyes of God. Such people are apt to be arrogant and proud of spirit, are prone to commit the sin of the Pharisees, the sin of the closed mind. It is the humble-minded and the unsophisticated that calls come, as it came from the Master himself to the fisherman pulling their nets, everyday people, the humble-minded. The self-sufficient spirit has no place for God. God's purpose in choosing those of no account in the eyes of the world is that all the glory should accrue to Himself and not to man. Salvation is entirely of Him. He alone is worthy to be praised.

Unfortunately, some of us have let pride stand in the way of receiving God's blessings and it becomes first on the list of deadly sins. We take pride in our accomplishments, giving ourselves the praise. We become arrogant, ambitious, self-righteous producing spiritual decay hindering our coming to God. We boast and put ourselves above God. Isaiah 2:11 states, "The eyes of the arrogant men will be humbled, the pride of men brought low; the Lord alone will be exalted." Nevertheless, God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what was weak to shame the strong, God chose what was low and despised in the world, even the things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the present of God.

In His Peace,
Charles Craig
Worship Ministry Chair

*"so that,
as it is written
"Whoever boasts,
should boast **in the Lord.**"
-1 Corinthians 1:31*

Christ Care Ministry

The Yoke of Christ

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”
– Matthew 11:29

Her name is Jenny. She is five years old and as a precious little girl she has already endured the pain of losing a playmate much like herself. One evening at the dinner table when asked what she had done that day, she said she had gone to see her friend’s mother. Mom and Dad glanced at each other and then back at little Jenny. “What did you say?” asked her parents. “Nothing,” she replied. “I just climbed on her lap and cried with her.” Indeed, a five-year-old angel of mercy.

How many times have we seen the suffering of those we love and felt that we wanted to do something? We wanted to help. We wanted to say the right thing, take the right action. Yes, we detested that feeling of helplessness. Yet, after we had investigated all the possibilities, we had to conclude that there was little we could do.

As Christians, we are thankful that Jesus had no such problem. Like little Jenny who climbed on the grieving mother’s lap and cried with her, Jesus does *much more* the same thing for us. He lived with us; He cried with us; He died for us.

Unseen by a cruel world, a little five-year-old girl shared a lot of Jesus with a hurting soul. When saddened, those who are in Christ Jesus know they are not sad alone. They know that Jesus cries with them and they know He is powerful enough to bring them comfort ... even when the tears flow. Indeed, the yoke of Christ is light because it is filled with love and mercy. He gives that yoke to you. Go and share it with others.

Prayer:

Healer of my soul, grant the eyes of my heart the clarity to see the comfort of your love and mercy through the tears of pain I shed in this world. As you shoulder me with your yoke of comfort, give me the passion to share that comfort with others. Amen.

PAX,

Pastor Tom

LWML News

Painting the Planet Purple with Servanthood

1942-2023 -- 81 YEARS of GOD

2023 Convention

Celebrate the Lord of the Nations (Psalm 33:12-13)

Date: June 22 - 25, 2023

Location: Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Theme: Celebrate the Lord of Nations

Scripture Verse: Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom He has chosen as His heritage! The Lord looks down from heaven; He sees the children of man. (Psalm 33: 12-13)

For registration and additional information, go to the LWML website (www.lwml.org).

A Summer Blessing

*May you walk with God this summer
In whatever you do
Wherever you go*

*Walking with God means ...
Walking with honesty and with courage,
Walking with love and respect
And concern for the feelings of others*

*May you talk to God this summer
And every day and in every situation*

*Talking with God means ...
Praying words of praise for the beauty of creation
Saying prayers of thanks for friends and good times,
Asking God's help in all our decisions
Expressing sorrow when you have failed*

May you walk with God every day. Amen

— *Author Unknown*

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

Serve the **LORD** with gladness.

Sheree McGraw, President
First Lutheran Church LWML



How Do You Rate Your Church?

"Like and Share" the Love of Christ!



How is the “reputation” of First Lutheran Church in our community? So much of this begins with our worship services, our Sunday school and outreach through community events that we provide online. This is an important tool for building our reputation—our online presence.

Online searches--Google is the new Yellow Pages, with You Tube

immediately ranking second in all online searches. Business, churches, and schools are ranked by reviews and stars. This ranking tool affects how and where they show up in searches.

Many of our visitors attend our services based on online interactions, either searching Google, viewing our services online, or following our social media. Digital media is a key to reach the un-churched and people who don't have a church home.

We are excited to see our online audience expand. This digital outreach can be helpful in attracting new people to our church. We have 214 visitors to our website, over 418 followers on Facebook and over 100 subscribers on YouTube. What does this mean? This shows the potential of digital outreach, where the searches and online viewers can become the visitors who join us for worship in the sanctuary.

How do we make sure First Lutheran Church is at the top of the list?

How does a person “click” with First Lutheran? As a congregation, we all have the power to help. Take a few minutes and do your own ‘research’ by searching for First Lutheran. Where do we rank? Do you like your church? Do you share your church?

You can help increase our ranking by following, liking, sharing—these actions boost our over-all presence online. Did you like a particular Sunday School Class or sermon? **Like it! Comment about it! Share it!** Your actions can boost our ranking, thus making it easier for people to find us. We encourage you to respond on every occasion that you view a First Lutheran service or devotional message. Even if you're not active on social media, leaving reviews on Google and Yelp has a tremendous impact!

Join our “Share Force” and be frequent!

Joy of the Lord



“On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come.”
1 Corinthians 16:2

Bible Study Opportunities

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

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



Neighborhood Yard Sale Recap

While it was a small first go of it, our multi-family yard sale on April 29 went well and attracted many from the neighborhood, as well as other parts of the city. The weather was perfect, conversation with each other and our shoppers was enjoyable, and Lorenza Robinson's bacon biscuits were delicious! The registration fee from families who participated went to One Roof, the coordinating agency for the homeless Continuum of Care of Central Alabama. Read more about their mission [HERE](#).



We hope to hold this event again next year and make it bigger and better! Start setting aside all those items you might like to part with so you'll be ready to join us next spring!

**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

SERVE & CELEBRATE

Lorenza Robinson

FACILITIES & PROPERTIES

Stan Weir

WORSHIP

Charles Craig

BROADCAST

June Weir

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

6/17: Wendy & Shane Harris

6/15: Becky & Kurtis Schultz

6/28: Sheree & Anthony McGraw

Worship Team...June 2023

June 4

Pastor: Kurtis Schultz

Worship Asst: Charles Craig

Reader: Mike Halbrooks

Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris &
James McGraw

Music: Larry Donaldson

June 18

Pastor: Tom Lackey

Worship Asst: Charles Craig

Reader: Frances Robinson

Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris &
James McGraw

Music: Becky Schultz

June 11

Pastor: Tom Noon

Worship Asst: Anthony McGraw

Reader: Robert Regulus

Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris &
James McGraw

Music: Larry Donaldson

May 28

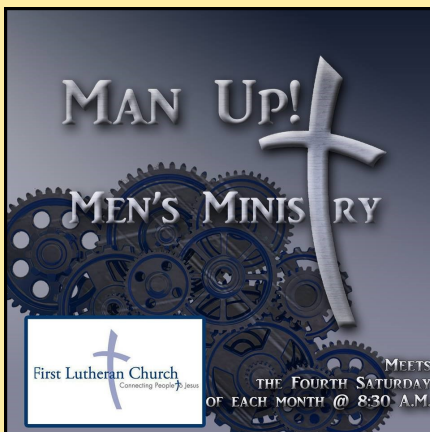
Pastor: George Murdaugh

Worship Asst: Henry Mosley

Reader: Wendy Harris

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.

