

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 The Fruit of the Spirit

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." (Galatians 5:22)

The Holy Spirit is the means by which we grow in Christ. If the Holy Spirit is working in us through the means of grace, there are certain evidences of fruit that should be manifested in our lives. Paul describes these in Galatians 5. This fruit is a portrait of Jesus, and it is also a picture of the Christian's life.

The first three of these evidences – love, joy, and peace – describe our relationship to God. The Holy Spirit puts God's love in our hearts, God's joy
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Local Events

Saturdays: Pepper Place Market; www.pepperplacemarket.com

Through 7/2: *Peter Pan the Musical*, Virginia Samford Theatre; www.virginiasamfordtheatre.org

Through 8/6: 2023 Summer Film Series, Alabama Theatre; www.alabamatheatre.com

6/29 - 7/2: Magic City Summerfest, Legion Field; www.magiccitysummerfest.com

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

7/8: Journey to Africa Street Festival, Cahaba Brewing Company; www.bhamnow.com/bhamn-event/j2a-cultural-arts-street-festival/

7/19 - 8/13: *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, Red Mountain Theatre; www.redmountaintheatre.org

7/26: Jackson Browne in concert, Alabama Theatre; www.alabamatheatre.com



(cont'd from p. 1)

in our souls, and God's peace in our minds. Everything a Christian does is, or ought to be, conceived in love, undertaken in joy, and accomplished in peace.

The second three – patience, kindness, and goodness – describe what should be our relationship to others; the patience that bears the rudeness and unkindness of other people and refuses to retaliate, the kindness that turns such tolerance into a benevolence that is not content with indifference but insists on love, and then the goodness that turns the wish into deed and begins to take the initiative in serving other people according to their need.

The final three – faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control – describe our relationship to ourselves. Faithfulness is dependability that always keeps a promise and completes a task. Gentleness is not a quality of the weak, but the strong and energetic who have their strength and energy under control. Self-control involves mastering the tongue, the thoughts, the appetites, and the passions.

This fruit taken together is kept in balance. The Holy Spirit is not satisfied, for example, if we display plenty of love for other people but don't have control over our lives: if we display much joy and peace but no kindness: if there is gentleness in our lives, but no firmness or dependability. We need all of these.

The fruit of the Spirit is not something that we can produce by our efforts, resources, and ingenuity. The Spirit, through the means of grace, is the divine gardener who cultivates this fruit in the life of believers. We need to note that Paul deliberately contrasts the fruit of the Spirit with the works of the flesh (what we can produce with our own efforts). We need the humility to acknowledge that we cannot produce these fruits by ourselves. So, we should invite the Holy Spirit to dwell in us, as we receive him in word and sacrament, to work God's will through us.

*Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of the faithful and **KINDLE** in them the fire of your love. Amen*

In His Peace,
Pastor Schultz



WORSHIP

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

From the President

During July, the church council and the call committee will be working on a couple of items. The roof over the Fellowship Hall and office area has had a history of leaks and repairs over the past 20 years. The roof has had many spot fixes but no long-term repair. Currently a blue tarp has been installed over the elevator room and part of the Fellowship Hall to control a leak. The church has received a bid to remove the asbestos roofing over the Fellowship Hall, education wing, and the office area and replace it with slate roofing. The Church Council will be reviewing the bid and deciding what we should do. The cost to complete this work is between \$63,000 and \$221,000 depending on how much of the roof is removed and replaced. If you are interested in seeing the bid and the material that will be used to complete the work, it is on display in the library. If you have any questions about the work to be completed, please talk to Stan Weir.

In May, the call committee received information from Southern District President Eric Johnson that we need to expand our search criteria for a new pastor to include more than 5 years of experience. He stated that there were few men in the field with 5 years of experience and if we opened up our criteria, we would find more available candidates. After discussion with the board of directors, it was decided to remove any experience limitations from our search criteria. On June 8, the call committee received another call list of six candidates. The committee will meet after July 4 to begin discussing the candidates. With God's blessing, the committee will be able to interview the candidates that appear to be a good match for our congregation and bring a call recommendation to the voters before September 1.

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

Called to Serve and Celebrate Ministry

There are certain checks that I dislike writing. In truth, I mean I really detest writing them! They are the ones that are a one-way drain on our finances. For example, whatever I spend for repairs on my automobile. It is little more than a necessary evil because I must have transportation. It is a one way drain on our resources. When the weather gets hot or cold, I pay for the extra energy we consume. It is sheer and simple subtraction. And that bugs me! For many folks, giving (i.e., contributing) is in that same category. It is sheer and simple subtraction. The more you give, the less you have. Some even call it “paying my church dues.” For those folks, it is a one way drain on their resources. They will never see that money again, and that bugs them!

Just Like Sowing Seed

Obviously, we have not done a very good job of teaching God’s children what God has to say about giving in the Bible. God says you cannot out-give God. Jesus said that what you return to God, the Giver, is just like sowing seed. He said that God will guarantee the growth. Of the many miracles recorded in the four Gospels of the New Testament, there is only one miracle that Jesus performed that is included in all four accounts. Do you know which one it is? It is the one when a young lad happens along carrying five loaves of bread and two fish. Andrew, one of Jesus’ disciples, immediately plays the subtraction game and says, “But what is that among so many?” When our Lord comes on the scene, however, the youth gave him his five loaves and two fish, and Jesus began to multiply the gift! He took the gift and blessed it into enough to feed five thousand people. It is not something down the drain that they will never see again. It is something given that Jesus multiplies.

Making Ends Meet

At our house we cannot afford to miss sales and use coupons to make ends meet. We keep the thermostat set low in the house in winter and high in the summer. However, I suspect we could make ends meet without doing any of this. But there is one thing my spouse and I have decided we cannot afford not to do: we cannot afford not to give the first fruits of our income back to God. We cannot deny God or ourselves the opportunity for God to multiply our generosity. For God promised that “He will always make us rich enough to be generous at all times.” There is one check I do not detest writing out. It is not a one way drain on the family finances. It is the one that trusts that God is the great multiplier. Besides our love for the Lord, we simply cannot afford not to be generous!! Not when God, the Giver, is at the calculator!

Lorenza Robinson
Called to Serve & Celebrate Ministry

Deacons' Corner

"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'"

-Psalm 122:1

Greetings to the members of First Lutheran,

And the blessings of our Lord Jesus Christ to every one of you. Now that the spread of COVID-19 is in decline, many of our members have returned to church for in-person worship services. We, the deacons of First Lutheran Church, invite you who are physically able to join us in the receiving of the Lord's Supper and the fellowship that we enjoy with one another. We genuinely want you to join us at First Lutheran in receiving the grace of God in Jesus Christ on Sundays in the Divine Service. Our Lord has promised to be wherever two or three are gathered in His name He will be there to bless you with all the treasures of heaven.

Of course, our online services will continue for members who are physically unable to attend and continue to be an opportunity for evangelism and outreach for the lost, bringing the Word of God through the hearing and preaching of His Word.

As deacons, we are servants in the church and we want to make everyone feel welcome, to be encouraging in the spiritual life of the congregation and to provide for each member's physical well-being when needed. We are here to assist the pastors in their well-being and in serving you. If we can be of help, or if you have questions, please give me a call.

In His Service,

Charles Craig
Chairman, Board of Deacons



Christ Care Ministry

Spring Water

“... but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” – John 4:14

Going the back way home earlier in the spring, I had the good fortune of crossing over Lake Purdy and I couldn't help but notice that she was almost at full pool. It was a glorious ending to a fine day as a gentle rain was falling in the shadows of the setting sun. Needless to say, it was a magnificent scene.

I thought about that ending rain a lot as the finishing trickles peppered the top of the water, splashing back up as if it was raining upside down. The last of the water flow rolled down the banks and into the lake adding to the reserve source of water that will help, as we look to extended periods of dryness in the next few months. All of this water was free flowing and at a peak of abundance as I witnessed a full lake. With the sun setting and late shadows forming, the moisture was rising over the lake and leaving traces of low hanging clouds between the lakes surface and the treetops along the shoreline. At that very moment, earth seemed to be peacefully smiling back at God, thanking Him for His soaking gift of late spring rainwater.

My thoughts turned to Jesus using the analogy of water and how its relationship to life is reflected so many times in Scripture. As water rescues, refreshes, and preserves us in the drought of our physical lives, the water Jesus gives us refreshes our spiritual lives and preserves us not only now but throughout all eternity. And what's even more exciting and unbelievable is that this water is given to us to share with others. This ***“spring water welling up”*** within us comes forth by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is God's work not only within us as individual spiritual growth takes place, but also as it flows over the brim of our souls in abundant love and service to others. It is the gift of Jesus to us – the gift of salvation bubbling forth from us like a spring endlessly bubbles from the ground.

So, dear friends, when you look at the rains that come watering the ground and giving new life, remember the new life Christ has given you. Refresh yourselves in God's Holy Word, partake regularly of the sacrament of Holy Communion, and share its refreshing goodness with all around you. This spring of living water is life eternal! Don't try to hold the bubbling spring back. After all, God created the spring to bubble.

God's Peace,

Pastor Tom

LWML News

Painting the Planet Purple with Servanthood

1942-2023 -- 81 YEARS of GOD

From Quiet Times to Noisy Love ... Patience, Patience

In the Word

“Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!”

- Psalm 27:14

Of the Word

She thought she was mentally prepared for six weeks on crutches. Instead, she discovered she was not a “patient” patient. The wait for healing was intolerable and she was in constant pain. Her prayers turned into whining! Then a card arrived in the mail with a much-needed message: **“Patience is how we behave while we are waiting.”**

We often give our request to God in faith, but forget the response will come in His time. Waiting for the Lord’s answer can be difficult. God knows how stubbornly impatient we can be! Perhaps that is why David, who wrote Psalm 27, instructs us twice in verse 14 to *wait for the Lord*, as well being *strong* and letting *your heart take courage* as you wait.

Our God is gracious and loving. He knows what is best for us and when the time is right. In a world that expects instant gratification, we can be witnesses to the faithfulness of our Lord by our confident patience and trust in Him.

Walking with my Lord

Lord, forgive my times of impatience. Instead give me the peace that passes all understanding as I wait with hope for You. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

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

Serve the **LORD** with gladness.

Sheree McGraw, President
First Lutheran Church LWML

Source: Jan Struck, from *Mustard Seed*, a LWML devotion – www.lwml.org



How Do You Rate Your Church?



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

Let us not become
weary in doing
good, for at
the proper time
we will reap
a harvest if
we do not give up.

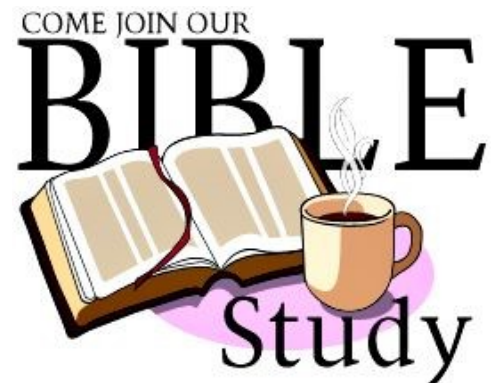
Galatians 6:9



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.





Potluck

LUNCHEON

5TH SUNDAY POTLUCK

JULY 30

Bring a dish to share on July 30 and join us for lunch in the Fellowship Hall immediately following the worship service.

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



7/4: Beverly Halbrooks
7/5: Josephine Stallworth
7/26: George Murdaugh
7/28: E.J. Robinson

7/17: Nelson & Marcy Sharit

Worship Team...July 2023

July 2

Pastor: Kurtis Schultz
Worship Asst: Glen Thompson
Reader: Eva Hill
Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris & James McGraw
Music: Larry Donaldson

July 23

Pastor: Tony Ramsey
Worship Asst: Henry Mosley
Reader: Sheree McGraw
Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris & James McGraw
Music: Larry Donaldson

July 9

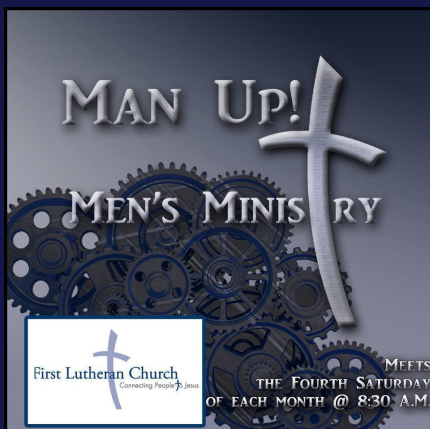
Pastor: George Murdaugh
Worship Asst: Anthony McGraw
Reader: Judy Drews
Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris & James McGraw
Music: Larry Donaldson

July 30

Pastor: Tom Noon
Worship Asst: Mike Halbrooks
Reader: Carol Lackey
Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris & James McGraw
Music: Larry Donaldson

July 16

Pastor: Tom Lackey
Worship Asst: Charles Craig
Reader: James McGraw
Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris & James 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.

