

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 Deacons' Corner
- 5 Joy of the Lord
- 6 Christ Care Ministry
- 7 LWML News
- 8 Evangelism 101
- 9 Voter's Meeting
- 9 Evening Prayer
- 10 Birthdays & Anniversaries
- 10 Worship Team



First Lutheran Church

2507 Highland Avenue
Birmingham, AL 35205
205.933.0380

www.firstlutheranbham.org

[View our Church Calendar](#)



Pastor's Pen Wet Feet Faith

"But immediately He spoke to them, saying, 'Take heart, it is I; have no fear.' And Peter answered him, 'Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you on the water.' He said, 'Come.' So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus."
- Matthew 14:27,29

For many years I have read the story of Jesus walking on the water and seen Peter's lack of faith as some kind of sad but understandable weakness. This time when I read the story, I saw something different: I saw Peter take a courageous first step! While all those in the boat would eventually worship Jesus, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God," only Peter faith had "feet," trusting that Jesus was Lord of heaven, earth, and also the sea.

Continued on page 2

Local Events

Saturdays: Pepper Place Market; www.pepperplacemarket.com

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

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

8/4: Art on the Rocks, Birmingham Museum of Art; www.artsbma.org

8/16: Lyle Lovett & His Large Band, Alabama Theatre; www.alabamatheatre.com

8/21-27: Sidewalk Film Festival; Downtown Theatre District; www.sidewalkfest.com

8/26-27: Taste of 4th Avenue Jazz Festival, Urban Impact at 4th Avenue Historic District; www.4thavenuejazz.org



(cont'd from p. 1)

Which of us, like Peter, would have climbed over the side of the boat, lowered ourselves to the water, and carefully put our feet down on a heaving sea to risk that first step? How can we gain the kind of faith, imperfect though it was, that Peter displayed? Perhaps a closer examination of this story can help us.

First, scripture records that Peter was the only one who, upon hearing Jesus' voice, answered Him that night. Peter first of all heard the voice of Jesus' calling to be able to respond. We can only display this kind of faith if we are hearing Jesus call to us in His word.

Second, Peter asked Jesus to strengthen his faith. Peter asked, "Lord if it is you, bid me come to you on the water." His answer was, "Come." Jesus will give us the strength of faith we need to heed His Call.

Third, Peter trusted Jesus. Peter's experience of Jesus' faithfulness enabled him to trust the Lord in this new circumstance. In trust he obeyed. It is only God's gracious, loving, eternal, faithfulness to us that enables our trusting obedience.

Last, when in his weakness fear overcame him and began to sink, he called out to Jesus for help and he was saved. It is not the strength of our faith that saves us. We are saved when we call out in helpless weakness to Jesus, the only one who can save us.

Peter was a simple fisherman with an extraordinary God given faith. Like Peter, we will, in every circumstance, find Jesus to be faithful to His word.

Lord, grant us the grace to listen for Your voice, the courage to ask in faith believing, the faith to trust in Your goodness, and the knowledge of Your presence in our every need. 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

Following the worship service on Sunday August 6, a Voters Assembly meeting will be held in the Fellowship Hall. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss replacing the roof over the fellowship hall and the office area. The sanctuary roof is still in good shape at this time and does not need to be replaced. Stan Weir has worked for over a year to get a bid from a contractor to repair the roof. Measures have been taken to stop leaks in the roof but the roof continues to leak in the fellowship hall, the elevator room, and the men's restroom. Since the leaks cannot be stopped, the roof needs to be removed and replaced. Magnum Construction has submitted a proposal to the church that is broken down into three strategies for replacing the roof. The different strategies use the same material but differ in the amount of the roof that is replaced. The lowest cost proposal replaces about one-third of the roof. The middle cost proposal replaces two-thirds of the roof and the most expensive proposal replaces the whole roof over the fellowship hall and the office area (it does not include the sanctuary). The work for the two partial roof replacements would be discreetly done on the backside of the church and would not look patchworked.

The Board of Directors met on July 10 to review the proposals and to visualize how the roof would be replaced with each of the proposals. In the end the board felt that replacing the whole roof was the preferred method since the roof is 70 years old and it would be better to address all of the roof at one time. The contractor recommended either a steel shingle or a slate shingle as the roofing material. Both shingles have the same 50-year warranty but the slate roof is significantly more expensive. The cost of the project would be \$117,897 with steel shingles and \$142,239 with slate shingles. The board decided to recommend the steel shingle.

Samples of the roofing and the proposals are on display at the church. Please contact Stan Weir if you have any questions.

In Christ's service,
Glen Thompson
Congregational President

Called to Serve and Celebrate Ministry

“And charge them to do good, to be rich in good works and generous, sharing what they have.”

-1 Timothy 6:18

This verse brings to mind the familiar story of the Widows mite. Jesus sat down opposite the temple and watched the people putting their money in the treasury. Many wealthy members came along and put in large sums of money. Then a widow came and prepared to put in her last penny.

Jesus allows this woman to give her last penny in the world to the church. She needs that money as much as anybody. She is poor herself. When she drops that last penny in the treasury, she's broke ... no money for food, no money for housing, no money for clothes, no money for the necessities of life.

Shocking! We're trying to build up bank accounts, get some investments going, build up a little security, cut some corners to save money, then she goes and gives her last penny away for the poor.

Studies have shown that the less money people have, the more generous they often are with it.

The motive behind her giving is that she cares for other people. She cares about them even more than she cares about herself. The issue Jesus is raising here is not the amount of money that is given, but the compassion behind the gift.

This woman gave more than anybody else because she was willing to sacrifice, completely. They gave a lot of money, but it was small in proportion to their wealth; she gave a penny, but it was everything she had. She gave “the little that is all.” It was an enormously greater sacrifice on her part.

Lorenza Robinson
Called to Serve & Celebrate Ministry



Deacons' Corner

Welcome, Welcome, Welcome!!!

You are welcome at First Lutheran Church as the Lord calls His people to return. Jesus says, "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). It is wonderful to see our members return to the celebration of Christ's gifts. Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable and always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain (1 Corinthians 15:58).

A question for you: What is so great about following Jesus?

In His Service,
Charles Craig
Chairman, Board of Deacons



Joy of the Lord



Christ Care Ministry A Servant's Heart

*"Whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap."
- Ecclesiastes 11:4*

One reason many of us never volunteer is because we think we're not good enough. Some churches foster this idea by making "excellence" an idol. They say, "If it can't be done with excellence, don't do it." Of course, we like to do things well but in the beginning that doesn't always work out.

Jesus never said never make excellence an idol! Less-than-perfect service is always better than the best of intentions. Almost everything we do is done poorly at first - that's how we learn. God's plan has always been to involve as many ordinary folks as possible, not have things run by a few elites. Real servants do every task with equal dedication!

They *"work at it with all [their] heart"* (Colossians 3:23). For them the only issue is - **does it need doing?** It is important to remember that God never exempts you from the mundane; it's part of your character development. Listen: *"If you think you are too important to help, you are only fooling yourself"* (Galatians 6:3).

Jesus washed feet, helped children, prepared breakfast, and served lepers. Nothing was beneath Him. He didn't do it in spite of His greatness; He did it because of it! It's your willingness to do the not-so-great stuff that qualifies you for greater stuff. There'll always be more people willing to do great things than little things. The race to be a star is crowded but the field to be a servant is wide open.

Sometimes you have to serve upward to those in authority, other times, downwards to those in need. Either way, you develop a servant's heart when you're willing to do whatever is required.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, help me to do whatever needs to be done for others – to help no matter what the need. In Jesus' Name, Amen

God's Peace,

Pastor Tom



LWML News

Painting the Planet Purple with Servanthood

1942-2023 -- 81 YEARS of GOD

Couldn't attend the **LWML National Convention?**

Watch from home at livestream.com/TheLWML. Sessions are archived to view now.

September TO REMEMBER

Giving to others as He so generously gives to us.

Lutheran Women in Mission Giving Day

Give to the Mission Goal on *SEPTEMBER 12, 2023*

SAVE THE DATE – PLAN TO ATTEND

October 13-15, 2023: LWML Gulf States District Fall Retreat at STONE BRIDGE FARM, Cullman, AL
Confident. Not Confused. Continuing the Crusade of the Proverbs Woman

For more information go to the website: www.lwmlgulfstates.org

MUSTARD SEED DEVOTION

The Word: Wisdom for Living ... The Choice is Mine

In the Word – *“The light of the eyes rejoices the heart, and good news refreshes the bones.” - Proverbs 15:30*

Of the Word - Without a doubt smiling faces make us happy, and good news makes us feel better. A twinkle in the eye and a cheerful greeting can give others a feel-good day. People with positive attitudes are a joy to know. The truth is our outlook on life is a matter of choice. No one can force us to have a good or bad attitude. So, what will the choice be today? Will people be pleased to see us or will they try to avoid our presence? Will we speak words of encouragement or discouragement? Will the light of Jesus shine in our eyes? Will the sweet words of the Gospel of grace, love, and forgiveness we share with someone be refreshing to them. “Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say rejoice” (Philippians 4:4). Will the joy of knowing Jesus Christ as the Savior, who loving died for our sins, come through in all we say and do? *A Point to Ponder: How will the light in my eyes reflect the love of Jesus Christ today?*

Walking with my Lord - Father, I ask an attitude like that of Jesus whatever my circumstances may be. Help me to greet others with sweet words that reflect my love for You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

(Authors: Marcia Gomulka and Myrna Lou Meyer)

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

Serve the **LORD** with gladness.

Sheree McGraw, President
First Lutheran Church LWML



What Do Restaurants and First Lutheran Church Have in Common?

I was searching for a new restaurant for dinner recently. I thought I had visited all the newest places in town and now I just wanted something different. Different location, different vibe, different (good) food—yes, that is what I am after!

My favorite source for such information is my friends, because my friends have good taste that I appreciate and trust. Can you think of a time when you asked a friend and they enthusiastically responded, “this place was great, good service, cool atmosphere, delicious food! You’ve just got to go there!”

You can’t wait to get there—right?

Marketing gurus will tell you the best advertising is firsthand, word of mouth from a trusted source. There is no pressure, no money made from your visiting the highly recommended restaurant. It is all in your favor to try it.

Now, I’m about to hit you with a startling thought—this is **Evangelism 101**. Tell me, what is your favorite thing about First Lutheran Church? What excites you or motivates you to come here? What is it that you would enthusiastically tell people “You’ve just got to go there!” This is your “evangelism story.”

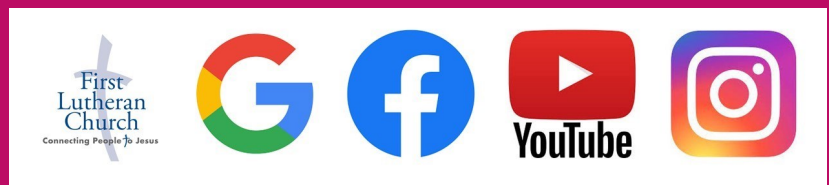
And will you share your story on the internet? I am asking because in today’s world we are googling for all types of information. We look for restaurants, new homes, new cars, and new friends on the internet. This information is built by people adding their opinions. The more data input (opinions) for a particular restaurant, for example, ranks it much higher in the google search, so you find it at the top of the list.

It is super easy to leave a review at this link: <https://g.page/r/Cdls1x3qvUyXEB0/review>. While you may not meet them face to face, your voice can be an influence. I can show you how or send you the step-by-step instructions.

We see much higher rankings and more viewers while we are streaming our Advent and Lent devotions. Our “evangelism stories” can have the same impact on Google rankings, Facebook, and YouTube. We are launching a First Lutheran Instagram account. Instagram is extraordinarily popular, especially with younger people. Instagram live events are an excellent way to build rapport, trust, and credibility with followers. These stories provide an inside look at our Church. Ah-ha, another tool for evangelism!

We want to take this a step further by adding your story to our social media sites. You don’t need a polished presentation, just a simple conversation. Contact me and let’s talk.

June Weir, junerweir@gmail.com



**VOTER'S MEETING****August 6**

Please plan to attend the Voter's Meeting immediately following the worship service on August 6 to discuss roof replacement.

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.



**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/DEACONS

Charles Craig

BROADCAST

June Weir

FIRST IMPRESSIONS EDITOR

Heather Lackey

Birthdays & Anniversaries



8/6: Anthony McGraw
8/7: Boni Hoover
8/9: L'Tanya Sims
8/10: Austin Stallworth
8/12: Nelson Sharit
8/12: Ernest Washington III
8/13: Dot Claunch
8/24: Evelyn Veal

8/14: Tom & Carol Lackey
8/30: George & Teresa Murdaugh

Worship Team...August 2023

August 6

Pastor: Kurtis Schultz
Worship Asst: Anthony McGraw
Reader: Frances Foy
Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris & James McGraw
Music: Larry Donaldson

August 20

Pastor: Tom Lackey
Worship Asst: Henry Mosley
Reader: Glen or Pat Thompson
Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris & James McGraw
Music: Becky Schultz

August 13

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

August 27

Pastor: Tony Ramsey
Worship Asst: Glen Thompson
Reader: Henry Mosley
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.

