

FIRST Impressions

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A Publication of First Lutheran Church • Birmingham, AL

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First

Lutheran Church

2507 Highland Avenue
Birmingham, AL 35205
205.933.0380

www.firstlutheranbham.org

[View our Church Calendar](#)



Pastor's Pen Everything I Count as Loss

"Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord." -Philippians 3:8

Paul could make this statement. Can we? We may sing about it, even pray about it--but as most people know, including me, it may still be too bold a statement to make about one's own life.

The basis of Paul's statement can be traced back to his confrontation with the Resurrected Christ. Prior to that time, he, Saul (not yet renamed Paul by Jesus) had been busily defending the old faith and the tradition of the fathers.

Continued on page 2

Local Events

Saturdays: Pepper Place Market; www.pepperplacemarket.com

9/14-16: Middle Eastern Food Festival, St. George Melkite Catholic Church; www.saintgeorgeonline.org/food-festival

9/14-24: Rodgers & Hammerstein's *A Grand Night for Singing*, Virginia Samford Theatre; www.virginiasamfordtheatre.org

9/15: 16th Street Baptist Church Commemorates Church Bombing, 16th Street Baptist Church; www.16thstreetbaptist.org

9/22: Birmingham Zoo Twilight Hours, Birmingham Zoo; www.birminghamzoo.com

9/22-24: Furnace Fest 2023, Sloss Furnaces; www.furnacefest.us

9/29-30: ASO Masterworks presents Beethoven's Seventh Symphony & Copland's Clarinet Concerto, Alys Stephens Center; www.alabamasymphony.org



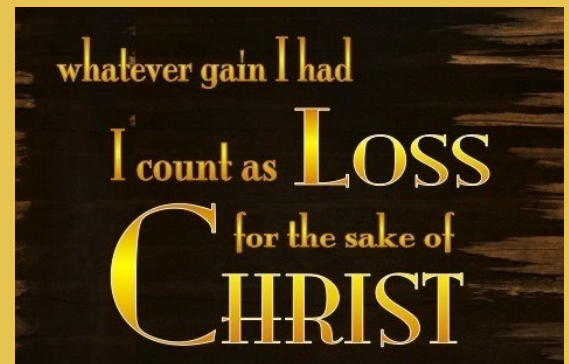
(cont'd from p. 1)

It was his pride and joy to be numbered among the most faithful. When he heard of people following this new Way (not yet identified by the name "Christian"), he turned his zeal to their extermination because it was polluting and damaging the faith of the fathers.

It was on Saul's journey to Damascus to find and bind these "wrongheaded," deluded souls that he was abruptly stopped by a bright light and an unfamiliar voice: "Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" Recognizing that he was being confronted by the Lord, Saul asked shakily, "Who are You, Lord?" And the answer came, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting"! That did it for Paul. As soon as he regained his eyesight, he turned around 180 degrees. Jesus' gracious conversion included a new name "Paul" to mark his new life. From that time on, his tremendous zeal was devoted to making known the Good News of Jesus.

Being a Christian in those days was risky, dangerous business. This letter to the Philippians was written years later by Paul who was now imprisoned for his witness of faith. The people who had come to know Jesus Christ through Paul's preaching at Philippi had not forgotten their teacher. Paul, their spiritual father, wants these young Christians to know that God is still in charge, regardless of what happens to him or to them. I want you to know that what happened to me has really served to advance the Gospel."

Moreover, as he recounts the course of his own life, he can say, "I count everything as nothing compared with the excellency of knowing Jesus as my Lord."



Only those who have walked with Jesus over the hard ways, the rough roads, and the dark times can make this assertion. The world has nothing compared to what the love of God brings to the human heart.

O most loving Father, You will us to give thanks, for all things, to dread nothing but the loss of You, and to cast all our care on You, who cares for us; preserve us from faithless fears and worldly anxieties, and grant that no cloud of this mortal life may hide from us the light of that love which is immortal, and which You have manifested to us in Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. 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



On August 6, the voters assembly approved a bid to replace the roof over the fellowship hall and the office area with a steel coated roof for \$117,891.96. In addition, approval was given to repair, replace, and paint all exterior woodwork that needs repair. This is expected to cost an additional \$7,613.76. The total cost of the project is \$125,505.72. After the contract is signed and the roofing material is received by the contractor, the project should take two

weeks to complete. The estimated completion date at this time is September 20. No loans or special appeals will be needed to pay for the work. I am thankful that God has motivated his people to give generously so that the costs of this project could be handled without the church needing to take out a loan. As soon as this work is completed, the Church Council will begin looking at the cost to repair the damage in the interior of the church caused by the roofing leaks.

At the voters meeting, the call committee presented Pastor Kevin Barron and asked the congregation to extend a call to him. Pastor Barron is currently serving Calvary Lutheran Church in Baltimore, Maryland. He has been there since he graduated from Concordia Lutheran Seminary in St. Louis five years ago. He is married and has three children. By unanimous vote, the voters agreed to call Pastor Barron. He will visit the congregation and explore the Birmingham area September 11-13. During the day he will tour the area and in the evening on Monday September 11 he will meet with the call committee, the church council and the deacons. On Tuesday evening the 12th, he will meet with the communication and technology services group followed by a congregational “Meet and Greet” from 6:30PM until 8:00PM. Everyone is encouraged to attend the meet-and-greet to introduce yourself and meet Pastor Barron personally. If you can bring an “Alabama dessert” (Pastor Barron is very interested in getting a taste of Alabama), please contact Lorenza Robinson and let him know what you are bringing.

In Christ's service,
Glen Thompson
Congregational President

Called to Serve and Celebrate Ministry

A generation ago, William Allen White was the brilliant editor of a newspaper in Emporia, Kansas. He was also a very generous person. One day he decided to give a fairly large piece of land to his city. In doing so he wrote that he always found three “joys” in a dollar. The first “joy”, he explained, was in making a dollar. “I dearly love to make a dollar,” he said. The second “Joy” he indicated is in having a dollar. His father had been a frugal man who had taught the importance of saving money. Therefore, Mr. White said, “I greatly enjoy having it.” Then the wise editor went on to say, “The third “Joy” is when you give dollars away.” With exultation, he told his fellow citizens that he was getting a big “joy” that day in giving them the dollars represented by the piece of land he had turned over to the city.

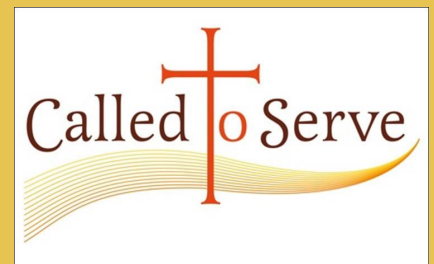
We need to remember those three “joys” Mr. White mentioned. There is nothing wrong with making a dollar legitimately. It is not the quest for money that is wrong, it is making an idol of money. It is putting the quest of wealth ahead of the quest for obedience to God.

It is also permissible for Christians to have money. Better to be in a position of having resources than being dependent upon the government or beholden to people who misuse power and authority. There is a certain healthy freedom that comes to those who have adequate resources. If we are proper stewards of money, there is a legitimate “joy” in having it.

But, of course, being a good steward of money always involves sharing it with God’s Church and with others. Those who practice such giving invariably testify as to the enjoyment of being able to give. They know that it is indeed more “blessed to give than to receive.” That, too, is a “joy.”

God fills our lives with good things. They are for us to enjoy. They are also for us to share. Even when we share a generous portion of them, we still have more than we can use. The Bible calls this “proportionate giving.” It is the reality that all we have comes from God, and as stewards of these gifts, God asks us to return and to share a portion of them.

Lorenza Robinson
Called to Serve & Celebrate Ministry



Deacons' Corner

One Body with Many Members: Who Are We?


“For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body though many, are one body, so it is with Christ...For the body does not consist of one member but of many.”

- 1 Corinthians 12:12-14

At First Lutheran Church, Birmingham, we are one body composed by God, the body of Christ and members individually. He has appointed members of the Church with different gifts. As appointed members in the Church with different gifts, members enjoy both unity and diversity of his/her gifts or positions, but we pursue the same goal and the same God. Every member has a contribution to make which benefits the Church. No member is less important than another; everyone is needed. We are all equally important and do not compete with each other, we complete each other. This is who we are. To God be the glory forever and ever. God deserves all the glory.

In His Service,
Charles Craig
Chairman, Board of Deacons

Joy of the Lord



No one has ever
become poor by giving.

Anne Frank

 quote fancy

Christ Care Ministry

The Forgiveness in Forgiving

“From the Cross, Jesus prayed, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do’.”
- Luke 23:34

Early in His ministry, Jesus said to His disciples, “If you forgive those who have sinned against you, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.” (Matthew 6:14-15)

Jesus said, “Do not judge and you will not be judged. Do not condemn and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.” (Luke 6:37)

“If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

To carry the weight of non-forgiveness requires an emotional and mental strength no one has. Sadly, one can become addicted to holding a grudge, but harm to one’s self inevitably comes.

We were not created physically, mentally, or emotionally to withhold forgiveness indefinitely. The strain is too great. But there is another reason why withholding forgiveness is devastating. Although Jesus Christ accomplished atonement for our sins on the Cross, for us to receive that divine forgiveness individually requires repentance on our part AND forgiveness of those who have wronged us. In other words, what Jesus sacrificially won for us doesn’t become ours until we repent and forgive those who have sinned against us. A tall order indeed.

How can a person even WANT to do such a thing? It’s not until we probe the New Testament (through reading, by listening, or by Spirit-filled observation) that we discover we’re fully equipped to humbly do what our Father God requires. May we never forget: All His requirements are richly for our benefit. All of them. Through them we “grow up” into the maturity our Father wants for us. (Pity greatly the child whose parents impose no requirements, no expectations, no discipline. The child will be severely handicapped as an adult.)

May we always remember: Love flows unceasingly to us from the center of God’s being, and by His grace, His love carries with it everything we need to repent, to forgive, and to reflect the love and wisdom of our Savior God. It is a miracle of stupendous grace. ALLELUIA! AMEN!

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

Pastor Tom

Used with permission from the Commentaries of Rev. Dr. Norman H. McCrummen III

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 for viewing 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

Stone Bridge Farm - Cullman, Alabama

Confident. Not Confused: Continuing the Crusade of the Proverbs Woman

For more information, visit www.lwmlgulfstates.org.

Sticky Note from God

*Dear Child of Mine,
Never stop following
MY Light ...
John 8:12*

*Love,
Your Father*

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

Serve the **LORD** with gladness.

Sheree McGraw, President
First Lutheran Church LWML



Meet & Greet

You're Invited!

Dessert Meet-and-Greet with Pastor Kevin Barron

Tuesday, September 12

6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

First Lutheran Fellowship Hall

Please contact Lorenza Robinson if you'd like to volunteer to bring a dessert.

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



9/6: Meg Callahan
 9/7: Ashley Mercer
 9/7: Daralyn Sims
 9/8: Michelle Smith
 9/10: Priscilla Rivers-Williams
 9/12: Lorenza Robinson
 9/15: Doris Daniels
 9/27: Terry Shiflett
 9/29: Mike Halbrooks
 9/30: Zoe Welch

**No September Anniversaries
on Record**

Worship Team...September 2023

September 3

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

September 17

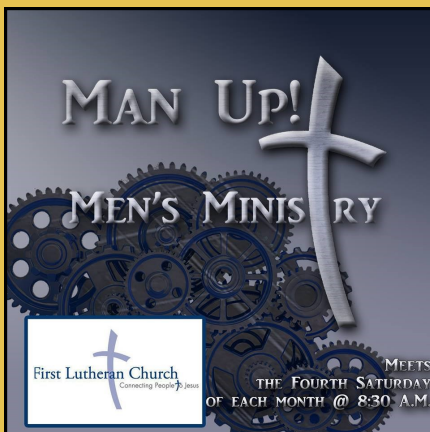
Pastor: Tom Lackey
 Worship Asst: Henry Mosley
 Reader: Robert Regulus
 Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris &
 James McGraw
 Music: Becky Schultz

September 10

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

September 24

Pastor: George Murdaugh
 Worship Asst: Glen Thompson
 Reader: Frances Robinson
 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.

