

# 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](http://www.firstlutheranbham.org)

[View our Church Calendar](#)



## Pastor's Pen Great is His Faithfulness

*"...for his steadfast love endures forever!" - Psalm 106:1b*

In the month of October, we celebrate the Reformation. Many have often wondered what enabled Dr. Martin Luther to be the driving force he came to be, during the Reformation. The answer can be found in our verse this month. Dr. Luther knew the security of God's love. Sharing in that security of God's love is the heart of our heritage of faith. It is firm and sure, an immovable rock on which to build, and an anchor to cling to in stormy seas. Vastly different from human love, it is not based on chemistry, feelings,

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## Local Events

**Saturdays:** Pepper Place Market; [www.pepperplacemarket.com](http://www.pepperplacemarket.com)

**10/5-7:** Greek Festival, Holy Trinity-Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Cathedral; [www.birminghamgreekfestival.net](http://www.birminghamgreekfestival.net)

**10/14-29 (Saturdays & Sundays only):** Hoots & Howls: Daytime Halloween Event, Birmingham Zoo; [www.birminghamzoo.com](http://www.birminghamzoo.com)

**10/12- 15:** Birmingham Food + Culture Festival, Pepper Place; [www.bhamfoodplus.com](http://www.bhamfoodplus.com)

**10/17:** ASO Concertmaster & Friends presents *Transylvanian Jazz*, Samford University Brock Recital Hall; [www.alabamasymphony.org](http://www.alabamasymphony.org)

**10/17-22:** *Mean Girls* presented by The American Theatre Guild, BJCC Concert Hall; [www.americantheatreguild.com/birmingham/shows/meangirls](http://www.americantheatreguild.com/birmingham/shows/meangirls)

**10/20 & 22:** ASO SuperPOPS! presents Hitchcock's *Psycho* Live with Orchestra, Alys Stephens Center; [www.alabamasymphony.org](http://www.alabamasymphony.org)



(cont'd from p. 1)

like-mindedness, or performance. We can trust in his love no matter what we do or what happens to us. He simply but profoundly loves us.

God's faithfulness is not measured by the instability and fickleness of man's soul. God's love is based on his nature, and on his faithfulness to himself. In his love, he made a unilateral, unbreakable covenant with his people, no matter what they say or how they act. There are consequences for their choices, but he does not stop loving them, nor does he renege on the covenant. God has a plan to bless and fulfill all of his people. He is faithful to that plan, whether or not individuals refuse or reject His desired blessing for them.

At the foot of Mount Sinai, the people of Israel quickly turned aside from the way of Yahweh, created other gods, and spent their time eating, drinking, and playing. When in his wrath God turned away from them, Moses appealed to him, "Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou didst swear by thine own self" (Exodus 32:13). Psalm 106 recounts Israel's rebellion, murmuring, provoking, and serving idols. Consequences were inevitable, but God never left them.

God continued with his perfect plan to save and bless his people. It is by his steadfast love that we are saved. Thanks be to God!

***Prayer: We rejoice, Father, in your faithfulness and steadfast love for us. Help us to grow in that love, that we may reflect it to a troubled and unstable world. 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



We enter the fall in great anticipation for the future. Pastor Kevin Barron visited the congregation September 11-13. He spent the time meeting with the church's leadership, touring the city and the surrounding areas, and meeting the congregation at a meet and greet dessert gathering. I greatly appreciate everyone's participation, especially Pastor Schultz for being Pastor Barron's chauffeur and tour guide.

Unfortunately, on September 24 Pastor Barron declined our call to him. While we are disappointed in his decision, we know that God is in charge and we look forward to discovering the shepherd that God has chosen for us. The Call Committee will meet in the early part of October to reflect on Pastor Barron's call and to determine the process forward to finding our next pastor.

October is Church Workers Appreciation Month in the LCMS. It is a time for us to show appreciation for the work our pastors, teachers, deaconesses, parish musicians and others do. I encourage you to make an effort to show your admiration and concern for our servants of Christ this month. We have been blessed to have five dedicated pastors to oversee our spiritual needs for the past three years. Please express your gratitude through some expression of thankfulness (i.e., a personal appreciation note, a small gift, a verbal thank you, a social media post of appreciation, etc.) for their service.

As we look forward to Advent and Christmas, the deacons have decided to purchase an artificial tree for the sanctuary. This will eliminate the problems associated with finding a natural tree and coordinating a crew to handle and install the tree. The tree that will be used is a 12-foot Vermont White Spruce that is pre-lit with candlelight LED lights. The deacons are purchasing the tree but if anyone would like to contribute to the purchase of the tree, a donation can be made by placing a designated gift in the offering plate.

In Christ's service,  
Glen Thompson  
Congregational President



## Called to Serve and Celebrate Ministry

There is a story about a prosperous farmer who was visited by his pastor one day. The pastor pointed out to him that the Lord had given him a fertile piece of land and had blessed him with sunshine and rain so that his crops would grow. The farmer replied, “I don’t mean to complain, Reverend, but you should have seen what a mess this place was when the Lord was running it by himself!”



There is a natural sense of pride we feel when we have accomplished something and that makes us reluctant to share the credit, even with God. Without God’s grace, blessings, and mercy, we literally could not exist. God is, the King of our world.

King David’s attitude about his own status before God stands out in stark contrast. In his final days, as he prepared to turn the throne of Israel over to his son, Solomon. David also laid the groundwork so that Solomon could build the Temple in Jerusalem. He had all of the materials needed to do the job gathered. He contracted with skilled craftsmen to serve his son. And he donated not only income from the royal treasury, but also huge sums from his personal fortunes toward the project. David then prayed a prayer that has to be considered remarkable for a king in that age. The whole prayer is recorded in I Chronicles 29:10–19 but consider the implications of just two verses.

First of all, David ascribed to God the attributes that were normally used to speak of a king. He said, “Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou are exalted as head above all.” (v.11) There were not many kings who would say that their kingdom really belonged to someone else. The second remarkable thing was that David acknowledged that ultimately, the people had God and not the king to thank for everything they had. He said, “But who am I, and what are my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from thee, and of thy own have we given thee” (v.14).

As we think about things that we label as our own, it is always helpful to recognize that whatever we have is really on loan to us from God. That is the real meaning of stewardship. It is vitally important that each of us view stewardship as the Christian way of life and not just a plea for our money. Stewardship is a lifelong struggle on our part to overcome our tendency to get and to keep and to develop our God-given potential to care and share. But even more, it is our humble acknowledgment that all good things come from God. With David we pray, “But who are we that we should be able to offer willingly? For all things come from thee, and of thy own have we given thee.”

Lorenza Robinson  
Called to Serve & Celebrate Ministry

## Deacons' Corner

### Grace Without Christ

Cheap grace is the grace we bestow on ourselves. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.

*Costly* grace is the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it a man will gladly go and sell all that he has. It is the pearl of great price to buy which the merchant will sell all his goods. It is the kingly rule of Christ, for whose sake a man will pluck out the eye that causes him to stumble, it is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his nets and follows him.

*Costly* grace is the gospel which must be *sought* again and again, the gift which must be *asked* for, the door at which a man must *knock*.

Such grace is *costly* because it calls us to follow, and it is *grace* because it calls us to follow *Jesus Christ*. It is costly because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is *costly* because it cost God the life of his Son: "You were bought at a price" (I Corinthians 7:23), and what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us. Above all, it is *grace* because God did not reckon his Son too dear a price to pay for our life but delivered him up for us. Costly grace is the Incarnation of God.

- Dietrich Bnhoeffter

In His Service,  
Charles Craig  
Chairman, Board of Deacons

## Christ Care Ministry

### The Precious Gifts of Time and Love

“Encourage one another and build each other up, just as you are doing.” (1 Thessalonians 5:12) “Oil and perfume make the heart glad, and the sweetness of friends comes from their earnest counsel.” (Proverbs 27:9) “Love one another with affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.” (Romans 12:10) “Now when Job’s three friends learned of all the troubles that had come upon him, each of them - Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar - set out from their home. They met together to go and console him. When they saw Job at a distance, they did not recognize him, and when they did recognize him, they wept aloud. . . They sat with him on the ground for seven days and seven nights, and no one said a word, for they saw that his suffering was very great.” (Job 2: 11-13) “Love is patient. Love is kind. Love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way. It is not irritable or resentful. . . Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” (1 Corinthians 13: 4-7).

Next to God and family, our friends - true, trusting, loving friends - give us joy, contentment, peace, and comfort. Such friendships do not “just happen,” though quick may have been the connection upon first meeting. Lasting friendships are formed when there is mutual enjoyment in each other’s company, when there’s mutual respect, mutual interests, common values, and a shared faith in the goodness and providence of God. Acquaintances are many, but true friends are made only over time and with openness of heart and trust of mind and spirit. Friendships flourish when there are leisurely hours spent together. Those hours will form such a strong bond that many years may pass before friends see each other again, and yet when they do see each other, it’s as though only several weeks have passed. The most precious gift anyone has to give is twofold: *time* and *love*. From our Creator Father we have received such a gift: we have received this life, and through the merits of Jesus, the promise of eternal life. And all because of God’s unconditional love for us. PRAISE GOD!

God’s Peace,  
Pastor Tom

- Used with permission from the commentaries of Rev. Dr. Norman Henry McCrummen, III /ptl.

## 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](https://livestream.com/TheLWML)

Sessions are archived for viewing now.

#### SAVE THE DATE – PLAN TO ATTEND

Celebrate LWML Sunday at First Lutheran

October 1, 2023

LWML Gulf States District Fall Retreat

October 13-15, 2023

Stone Bridge Farm - Cullman, Alabama

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

For more information, visit [www.lwmlgulfstates.org](http://www.lwmlgulfstates.org).

#### Sticky Note from God

*Dear Child of Mine,  
Great faith comes  
from knowing  
MY Word ...  
Romans 10:17*

*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



## Celebrate Our Lutheran Heritage Lutheran Heritage Potluck - October 29



October 31 is Reformation - the day Dr. Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the church in Whittenberg, Germany. Although The Reformation has German roots, the Lutheran Christian tradition is now shared by many ethnicities and cultures all over the world. Our congregation, First Lutheran Church, is a good example of this diversity. Everyone has a story to tell about their unique Lutheran heritage. And like most, a favorite recipe for a Sunday potluck dinner. Please bring your story and your favorite dish on Sunday, October 29<sup>th</sup> to our potluck after our Reformation Worship. If you're willing, please share your recipe and your story on our social media channels. Our live stream crew will be available to record your message.

We are inviting everyone who visited our congregation this past year. Please bring your friends and family too! Let's make this a grand celebration of our many heritages!



### First Lutheran on Instagram

Exciting News! First Lutheran will launch on Instagram!

We are thrilled to announce that we're taking a leap into the world of Instagram to further connect with our beloved congregation and share our faith journey with the world!

Follow us on Instagram @firstlutheranbham

Here's what you can expect from our Instagram page:

**Inspirational Messages:** Spiritual inspiration to uplift your heart and soul.

**Event Updates:** Stay in the loop about upcoming church events, workshops, and community gatherings.

**Community Spotlight:** Meet the wonderful members of our church family and learn about their faith stories.

**Behind-the-Scenes:** Get a glimpse of the people and passion that make our church a loving and welcoming community.

Help us spread the love and faith by following us, liking our posts, and sharing our content with your friends and family. Together, we can make a positive impact and continue to grow our church family.



# Joy of the Lord

Generosity  
leads to  
Joy & Praise

## 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](mailto: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



**10/5:** Judy Drews  
**10/9:** Wendy Harris  
**10/9:** Tim Shiflett  
**10/10:** Robert Regulus  
**10/12:** Jennie Kilbourne  
**10/16:** Elise Robinson  
**10/22:** Ernestine Craig  
**10/22:** Torrey Crenshaw  
**10/23:** Cynthia Brown  
**10/26:** Becky Schultz  
**10/29:** Judy Brown

**10/4:** Lorenza & Frances Robinson

## Worship Team...October 2023

### October 1

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

### October 22

Pastor: Tom Noon  
Worship Asst: Henry Mosley  
Reader: James McGraw  
Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris & James McGraw  
Music: Larry Donaldson

### October 8

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

### October 29

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

### October 15

Pastor: Tom Lackey  
Worship Asst: Charles Craig  
Reader: Judy Drews  
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.