

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 Lenten Transformation

"The Lord Jesus Christ will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself." (Phil. 3:21b)

As Christian we desire to become Christ like. This transformation is a lifelong process. The Scriptures tell us that Christ will do this work in us. We, however, short-circuit this process by ignoring his will and living for ourselves. This drive to live for ourselves is at the core of our nature,

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Local Events

Through 3/3: *The Color Purple*, Red Mountain Theatre;
www.redmountaintheatre.org

Through 8/18: *Heroes and Villains: The Art of the Disney Costume*, Birmingham Museum of Art; www.artsbma.org

3/8-9: Alabama Symphony Masterworks presents Brahms' *German Requiem*, Alys Stephens Center; www.alabamasymphony.org

3/9: Stayin Alive: One Night of the Bee Gees, Lyric Theatre; www.lyricbham.com/events

3/16: Alabama Symphony SuperPOPS! presents *The Music of Pink Floyd*, BJCC;
www.alabamasymphonyorg

3/24: World Ballet Series: *Swan Lake*, Alabama Theatre; www.alabamatheatre.com/events



(cont'd from p. 1)

pervading our minds, our emotions and our will. We would prefer to avoid the process of transformation, live unto ourselves, and rationalize that we are sufficient and able to do most everything. We turn to God only in dire circumstances.

Paul laments over some who have received Christ, but refuse his will for them. He says of them “their god is their belly.” They like Esau sell their spiritual birthright for a mess of pottage. He says that they “glory in their shame.” They justify themselves, and convince themselves of such unreality, that evil becomes good, and they rejoice in their delusion. He says their minds are set on earthly things, and they lose their relationship to the living God. They are “enemies of the cross.” They refuse to deny their natures, and walk with God as he seeks to change them. Their end is destruction.

Just as Jesus yearned to gather Jerusalem under his protection, so he longs to help, heal, nurture, and protect his followers. He likens his desire to care for us to that of a mother hen gathering her chicks under her wings in comfort and security. Will you yield to our Lord as he seeks to transform you into his likeness, or will you cling to your nature against his? Lent is the season of inner change. Let us take advantage of the power it provides.

Lord Jesus, convict me of my pride and rebellion. Reveal to me the full strength of your nature. Transform me into the person you have in grace created me to be, and allow me to reflect your nature to the world around me. Amen.

In His Peace,
Pastor Schultz

Bible Study Opportunities

- **Sunday Mornings (in person at First Lutheran) - 9:00 a.m.**
- **Wednesday Evenings (via Zoom) - 6:30 p.m.**
- **Saturday Mornings (via Zoom) - 9:00 a.m.**

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



From the President

During January and February, the church council has been discussing a calendar of events for 2024. The goal of the calendar is to serve as a guide for the year and help us focus on priorities from month to month. By developing the calendar, the council is looking for ways to increase involvement of members by keeping them informed of events in advance and to increase our involvement in the surrounding neighborhood. The council is also looking at what we can do to fill gaps in our programs and ministry. Historically the church has had a strong women's program through the LWML and the women's Tuesday Bible Study. With Covid, the Tuesday Bible Study ceased but the LWML meetings have continued. The council wants to continue to encourage women to participate and grow this organization but would also like to see a corresponding organization for men to form. The men's group would be encouraged to study the Bible together and to do acts or projects that would be pleasing to God. We will hold an initial meeting of a men's group fourth Saturday of April (4/28) at 8:00 AM at the church. A light breakfast will be served and followed by a short Bible study and then a discussion around future plans. Preliminary plans are for the group to meet once a month for breakfast and Bible study and to include a small project around the church or in the community. I hope that all men in the church will participate. Please contact me if you would like any additional information. More details will be published in the April newsletter.

The council is looking at holding events to involve the community. These could include a yard sale, game nights, movie nights, Chrismon craft event, and Christmas caroling. These events would be ones that would involve the whole congregation and also allow us to interact with the community around us in a nonthreatening way. It would also allow us to identify community needs and to contribute resources that could assist with these needs.

Concerning the call process, the voters' assembly on February 4 approved issuing a call to Vicar Andrew Frerichs. Vicar Frerichs will graduate from St. Louis Theological Seminary in the spring. Unfortunately, we have been informed by the seminary that the vicar will not be assigned to us when he graduates. The Call Committee is continuing to review prospective pastors in the field and will bring candidates forward as they are identified. The committee plans to bring a candidate for a call to the voters before Easter and schedule a visit by the called pastor after Easter. The committee continues to look forward to discovering the pastor that God has selected for us.

In God's service,

Glen Thompson
Congregational President and Chairman of the Call Committee

Called to Serve and Celebrate Ministry

“Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality.” - 2 Corinthians 8:13

Paul held up the generosity of the Macedonian churches to those in Corinth (2 Cor. 8). It seemed he desired that they show some kind of proof of their appreciation of the Lord’s blessing and sustaining power to them. He urged them, therefore, to bring to completion the great work begun earlier in their ministry. It seemed apparent they had forgotten, like we often do, with what fervor and fire they had started to serve the Lord. We, too, could use this urging of Paul’s periodically. He wanted to bring the churches in Corinth from their relaxed attitude toward giving and sharing and found it necessary to remind them of their oneness in the body of Christ. The Corinthians had begun to take pleasure in what others were doing for God’s kingdom and the sustaining of the earthly churches and had forgotten their part. Strive For Equality “Strive for equality,” was Paul’s urging to the Corinthians. Since Christ bore the total weight of our salvation on himself, could we not at least share in the earthly ministry as a body so that “He who gathers much does not have too much and he who gathered little does not have too little.” (2 Cor. 8:15)

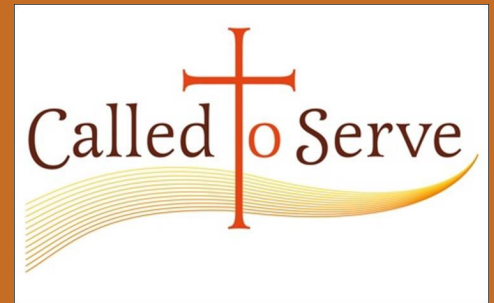
Prayer:

Disturb us Lord, when we are too well-pleased with ourselves; when our dreams have come true because we have dreamed too little; when we arrived safely because we have sailed too close to shore. Disturb us Lord, when with the abundance of the things we possess, we have lost our thirst for the water of life. Stir us Lord, to dare more boldly, to venture on wider seas, where storms will show your mastery; where losing sight of land, we shall find the stars. We ask you to push back the horizons of our hopes and to push us into the future in strength, courage, hope, and love. Open your hearts to the love God instills in them.

God loves you tenderly. What he gives you is not to be kept under lock and key, but to be shared. The more you save the less you will be able to give. The less you have, the more you will know how to share. Let us ask God, when it comes to asking God for something, to help us to be generous.

Mother Teresa

Lorenza Robinson
Called to Serve & Celebrate Ministry



Deacons' Corner

Children of God - Loved by the Father

1 John 3:1-3

There have been many great loves both Biblical and those written by the great authors of our time. Yet some of the most powerful and wonderful love, is the “LOVE” that we have received from the Father, through His Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Of course, we also give this type of love to our families, especially to our children. But is the love that we give to our Lord genuine? Do we experience the same love toward our Lord as we do our families and neighbors? This is a question that each of us must entertain.

On the other hand, there is truly a greater love for us which is no fantasy or a love story. It is the love for all mankind given in a promise by God the Father, himself and His Son, our Savior. But do you and I deserve it? I do not think so, yet this love has been given to us unconditionally. A teacher once asked the children in her class what was so amazing about God. One of the children responded, “He knows all about me and yet He still loves me.” He knows all about you and me. He knows of our failing to do His will, our unloving thoughts, and unkind words. He knows that we deserve His wrath. Yet He still loves us.

Furthermore, John tells us that the Father has lavished His love on us. He gives love generously, ungrudging, and unselfishly, in the same manner which we give our love to our children. God in His love for us satisfied his justice making us acceptable to himself. He brought us to faith in Jesus and through faith, we possess Christ’s righteousness. We stand before God acceptable to Him through His Son our Savior. However, there are times when we recognize our sinfulness and wonder how God can let you and me into heaven. We must look beyond our feelings and reasons and by faith lay hold to the promises of God. It is not how we feel about God that gives comfort, it is the fact that God loves us that gives us hope. The question is can you and I wait on the Lord for the fulfillment of His promises as Children of God – Beloved by the Father.

In His Service,
Charles Craig
Chairman, Board of Deacons

LWML News

Painting the Planet Purple with Servanthood

1942-2024 -- 82 YEARS of GOD



Return to Your REST

Psalm 116:7

The LWML Central Alabama Zone invites you to the
40th Biennial Gulf States District Convention

Montgomery Marriott/Prattville Hotel & Conference Center
April 26-27, 2024

For more information, visit <https://www.lwmlgulfstates.org>

Power in the Resurrection

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: – John 11:25

There is power, in the resurrection to the world ways a disconnection.
There is victory, arising from the dead a message of hope not of fear or dread.
There is salvation, full of love and grace not of defeat when Jesus we embrace.
There is eternal rest, everlasting life one filled with peace not of worldly strife.
There is forgiveness, rising from the grave there is a restoration as Jesus' life He gave!
-Deborah Ann Belka

~~to GOD be the GLORY~~

Today and always we are surrounded by HIS grace and mercy.
Serve the LORD with gladness.

Sheree McGraw, President



WORSHIP

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

2024 Lent Series

Join us for the Guided to the Cross special service for Ash Wednesday, as we are drawn to Calvary to receive forgiveness. In word and song, we contemplate how to live lives of forgiving one another as we have been forgiven by Christ through the cross.

Week 1: Guided to Hope

For Week 1 of Lent, we are drawn to Calvary to receive hope. In word and song, we contemplate how to live lives of hope as we remember that Christ went to the cross to save us forevermore.

Week 2: Guided to Love

For Week 2 of Lent, we are drawn to Calvary to receive love. In word and song, we contemplate how to live lives of love in response to the love Christ showed us on the cross.

Week 3: Guided to Peace

For Week 3 of Lent, we are drawn to Calvary to receive peace. In word and song, we contemplate how to live lives of peace in our hearts, souls and minds through Christ, who brought peace between us and God by the cross.

Week 4: Guided to Trust

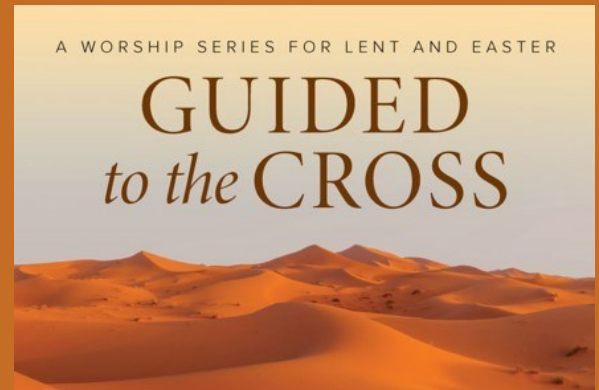
For Week 4 of Lent, we are drawn to Calvary to deepen our trust. In word and song, we contemplate how to live lives of trust in God, who entrusted his Son, Jesus, on the cross for our sake.

Week 5: Guided to Perseverance

For Week 5 of Lent, we are drawn to Calvary to grow in perseverance. In word and song, we contemplate how to live lives of perseverance in the midst of strife in the name of Jesus, who endured the cross to the very end for us all.

Palm Sunday: Guided to Humility

Join us for Palm Sunday, as Jesus enters into Jerusalem in humility on his way to Calvary. In word and song, we contemplate how to live lives of humility, guided by Christ and the cross.



- Continued on p. 8

(2024 Lent Series - cont'd from p. 7)

Maundy Thursday: Guided to Service

Join us for Maundy Thursday, as Jesus washes the disciples' feet in service to them on his way to Calvary. In word and song, we contemplate how to live lives of service, guided by Christ and the cross.

Easter Sunday: Guided to New Life

Join us Easter Sunday, as the crucified Christ is raised from the dead to new life. In word and song, we contemplate how to live a new life, guided by the risen Christ.

Christ Care Ministry Finality's Echo

"It is finished." - John 19:30

Has it ever occurred to you that there is an echo in this very text [John 19:17-30] of Jesus' triumphant cry, *"It is finished"* (v.30)? Look again at verse 22 where Pilate speaks, *"What I have written, I have written."* In other words, "It is finished. What's done is done. I'm not going to change it." Both statements, that of our Savior and that of the governor, are made with an act of finality.

But what a difference between the echo and the thing echoed. The apparent parallel is actually a contrast. The words of Jesus exude *victory* and *compassion*. The words of Pilate exude stubbornness and sarcasm. The one cry *saves*, the other needles. Jesus is through with His mission. Pilate is through with people.

Let the shoddy finality of Pilate's remark, *"What I have written I have written,"* call to mind the saving finality of Jesus' remark, *"It is finished."* That way even Pilate's nastiness can serve a wonderful and useful Gospel purpose.

He has risen!

Pastor Tom

Lent / Holy Week Schedule of Events 2024

Wednesdays

Through March 20: Lent Midweek Activities
Soup Supper - 5:15 p.m.; Worship - 6:00 p.m.

March 24: Palm Sunday
Worship - 10:15 a.m. (gather on front steps for Procession of Palms)

March 28: Maundy Thursday
Worship - 6:00 p.m.

March 29: Good Friday
Tenebrae Service - 6:00 p.m.

March 31: Easter Sunday - The Resurrection of our Lord
Breakfast - 8:15 a.m.
Easter Egg Hunt - 9:15 a.m.
Easter Worship - 10:15 a.m.



**Join us on the Second Sunday
of the month at 5:00PM for**

Evening Prayer

✠ ENTER IN SILENCE ✠

✠ WORSHIP PRAYERFULLY ✠

✠ DEPART IN PEACE ✠



Multi-Family Spring Yard Sale Saturday, May 18, 9 am – 3 pm

Location: First Lutheran Church Lawn & Parking Lot
2507 Highland Avenue South, Birmingham, AL

One Man's Trash is Another Man's Treasure!

First Lutheran Church is hosting a neighborhood yard sale on May 18th, 9 am until 1 pm. Anyone interested in participating may reserve a table for a \$25 donation made payable to First Lutheran Church. If you would like to volunteer to help or if you have any questions, please contact Wendy Harris at 205-706-9229. If you would like to participate in the yard sale, please email events@firstlutheranbham.org.

Table Request Form. Please complete this form and return with your donation of \$25. Your space will be confirmed upon receipt of your donation. Payment can be made on our website at www.FirstLutheranBham.org. Select "Give Now" and designate "Spring Yard Sale." Table location assignments are based on the order received. A table (8' long) and chair will be provided.

Please complete this form and email to events@firstlutheranbham.org to reserve your table.

Name:

Address:

Phone Number:

Email address:

Number of tables requested: ____ X \$25 = Total due ____

Would you like a receipt? Yes ____ No ____ Confirmation will be sent via email.

Please add events@firstlutheranbham.org to your contact list to avoid "spam" designation.

OR

You may print and mail this form along with your \$25 check made payable to First Lutheran Church. Please indicate "Spring Yard Sale" on the memo line.

Mailing address:

First Lutheran Church, 2507 Highland Ave. South, Birmingham, AL 35205

Please note, in the event of rain, an alternate date will be announced.

You may opt to donate any remaining items to charity and we will make arrangements for a pick up for Saturday afternoon. Yes ____ **I want to donate unsold items.**

Coming Attractions for 2024

Family Game Night is Back!

We are kicking off this event with a grand ole fashioned BINGO game! Please save the date Wednesday, July 17th at 6 pm. This fun night is open for members and neighbors of all ages.



We need your help to make this happen - any small prizes that you want to donate will be appreciated. Watch the newsletter and our website for more details.

Contact June Weir at junerweir@gmail.com

More Fun at Movie Night on the Lawn

As summertime is winding down and school is starting up again—let's enjoy one more fun event! Join our movie night on Saturday, August 10th at 6 pm on the front lawn weather permitting or the Fellowship Hall if weather doesn't cooperate.

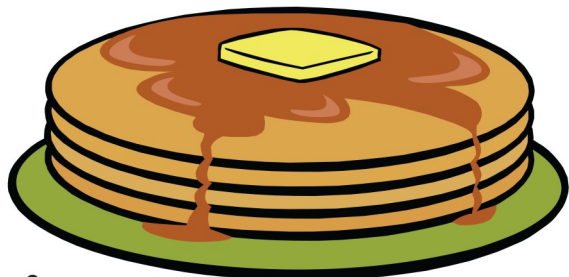
Please let us know what movie(s) you want to see, keeping in mind this event is open to the neighborhood and will entertain all ages.

If you have a DVD player or projector that we may use for the event, please let June Weir know. Send your suggestions for movie titles and other recommendations to junerweir@gmail.com

thank you

Our heartfelt thanks to First Lutheran friends and family, especially members from Unity Lutheran Church, for your dedication and commitment to the Lenten and Easter Devotionals. It is a very long list, so please help to thank everyone who participated by sharing the videos. You'll find the videos on our Facebook page and YouTube channel. Please share, share, share!

Pancake Breakfast



NEW! **Quarterly** **Pancake Breakfast**

Please join us for our inaugural event!

Sunday, March 3
8:15 a.m.

We plan to make this a free quarterly event this year, beginning March 3. We hope you'll attend for food and fellowship and stay for Sunday morning Bible study!

Joy of the Lord

"Grace-Giving" **2 Corinthians 8:1-15**

I. The Proper Theology Behind Giving

- A. God Gave First*
- B. Joyous in God*
- C. An Act of Love*

II. The Proper Practice of Giving

- A. Done Not Based on Ability*
- B. Done Sacrificially*
- C. Done Continually*

**Join us for breakfast on
Easter Sunday at 8:15 a.m.
in the Fellowship Hall.**

**We're looking for volunteers to bring a
breakfast casserole or other dish. If
interested, please reach out to
Lorenza Robinson.**



Easter Candy Needed

We're in need of candy to fill the eggs for the Easter Sunday egg hunt.

If you'd like to donate wrapped candy, please bring it to church by

Sunday, March 24 and give to Wendy Harris .



Reminder

Daylight Saving Time begins

Sunday, March 10 at 2:00 a.m.

Be sure to set your clocks **AHEAD** one hour before going to bed Saturday night.



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



3/3: Miriam Brown
3/10: Teresa Murdaugh
3/11: Wayne Speegle
3/12: Ginger Reeves
3/16: Eva Hill
3/25: James McGraw
3/28: Gwen Regulus
3/30: Andy Sullivan

3/17: Glen & Pat Thompson
3/23: Harold & Vivian McNair

Worship Team...March 2024

March 3

Pastor: George Murdaugh
Worship Asst: Charles Craig
Reader: Glen or Pat Thompson
Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris & James McGraw
Music: Larry Donaldson

March 10

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

March 17

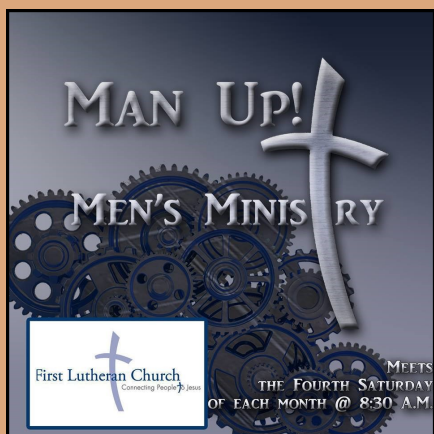
Pastor: Tom Noon
Worship Asst: Glen Thompson
Reader: Heather Lackey
Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris & James McGraw
Music: Larry Donaldson

March 24 - Palm Sunday

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

March 31 - Easter

Pastor: Kurtis Schultz
Worship Asst: Anthony McGraw
Reader: Robert Regulus
Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris & James McGraw
Music: Becky Schultz



MAN UP! Changes coming soon for our men's ministry.

Look for more information in the April newsletter!

