

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 Righteousness and Repentance

"I tell you that there will be in heaven over more rejoicing one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent."
- Luke 15:7

It is clear from the two parables that Jesus uses in Luke - the lost sheep and the lost coin - that he values repentance over righteousness. That may seem strange to us, since the New Testament exhorts us again and again to live godly and righteous lives. Yes, as followers of Christ we are to strive to live daily in a manner as free from sin and darkness as possible. In this process of

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Local Events

9/6: Fall Plant Sale, Birmingham Botanical Gardens;
www.bbgardens.org

9/6-7: Birmingham Artwalk, 20th Street North in Downtown;
www.birminghamartwalk.org

9/12: Cirque du Soleil Songblazers, BJCC Concert Hall;
www.cirquedusoleil.com

9/12-22: *The World Goes 'Round: The Music of Kander and Ebb*,
Virginia Samford Theatre; www.virginiasamfordtheatre.org

9/19-22: FOOD+ Culture Fest, Pepper Place and Sloss Furnaces; www.bhamfoodplus.com

9/27: The Piano Guys, Alabama Theatre; www.alabamatheatre.com

9/27-28: ASO Masterworks presents Shostakovich's *Festive Overture*, Barber's Violin Concerto, and Saint-Saëns Organ Symphony NO. 3, UAB's Alys Stephens Center;
www.alabamasymphony.org

9/28: Fiesta, Linn Park; www.fiestabham.com

9/29: Symphony in the Gardens, Birmingham Botanical Gardens;
www.alabamasymphony.org



(cont'd from p. 1)

sanctification, we need daily help from the Holy Spirit, who helps us recognize our sin, convicts us of it, and gives us the power to turn aside from its alluring temptation.

But Jesus values repentance even more highly, since it is through repentance that we can meet Him and he can return us to a close relationship with Him. We are the lost sheep; we are the lost coin. We wander away from time to time. We get lost in dark corners. We cannot find our way back. So, in His great love, He comes to find us. In His mercy, He forgoes punishment and leads us back to the light, to the security of the sheepfold, and to the place of usefulness.

It is when we acknowledge that we have gone astray that Jesus comes to our rescue. It is then that we rediscover His mercy and love. We are like foolish sheep when we deny that we need His saving. We will remain lost when we fail to be honest about the state of our soul or about our dangerous circumstances. Sometimes He allows us to wander off until we are in danger. He waits for us to call out desperately to Him before He reaches out to save us. He is always there. His love is constant, as He waits for us to express our need.

Prayer: Lord, help me to confess my sin and lead me in repentance back to you. Amen

In His Peace,
Pastor Schultz

Installation of Rev. Tommy Presley August 11, 2024



From the President

Praise God from whom all blessings flow! In August we as a congregation experienced some of the many blessings of God. Pastor Presley was installed as our pastor on August 11 completing a process that started on December 2, 2020. I am forever grateful to the Call Committee (Henry Mosley, Wendy Harris, Fran Foy, Robert Regulus, June Weir, Pastor Kurtis Schultz, and Pastor Tom Noon) for their insights, wisdom, patience, and perseverance. For me, the process was a great opportunity for faith growth. I was reminded a few times that God's time is not necessarily my time and to be still know that He is God.

The worship services on August 11 were very moving for me. The sermons by President Johnson and Dr. Ramsy were outstanding. I encourage you to watch them on YouTube or Facebook and to reflect on the messages.

We are now at the beginning of a new chapter for the church. The church council and Pastor Presley will be assessing our strengths and weaknesses and will begin planning the next era of First Lutheran's ministry. We have many opportunities for our ministry and it is time to be quiet and listen for God's direction.

The Fellowship Hall renovations were completed in record time. Thanks to Stan Weir and Larry Donaldson for coordinating and overseeing the project. A job well done, oh good and faithful servants.

We praise God for the healthy daughter born to Tori and Pastor Presley on August 1. We look forward to her baptism and watching her and her siblings grow up in the church.

In Christ's service,

Glen Thompson
Congregational President



Need to reach Pastor Tommy?

Email t.presley@firstlutheranbham.org or call the church at 205.933.0380 and when prompted to "select from the following menu," press 5.

This will connect you directly to him at any time.

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

Evening Prayer

✠ ENTER IN SILENCE ✠

✠ WORSHIP PRAYERFULLY ✠

✠ DEPART IN PEACE ✠



Man Up! Men's Ministry

Saturday, September 28

The September Man Up! gathering will take place **Saturday, September 28 at 8:30 a.m.** at the church. All men are invited and encouraged to attend. We'll begin with a prepared breakfast, followed by a short Bible study and a work project. A sign-up sheet will be posted on one of the bulletin boards.

Please sign up by September 22 so we'll know how many to plan on for breakfast. Contact Glen Thompson with any questions.



WORSHIP

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

Deacons' Corner

Proper Time

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven.

- Ecclesiastes 3:1 NIV

Greetings to our parishioners of First Lutheran Church and God's blessings to each of you. Four years ago, during the pandemic, the Church had been closed. However, when the Church reopened, it was without a sole pastor. It was reopened by a "dedicated retired Pastor." We are truly thankful that our Lord sent him to serve us and bringing other retired dedicated pastors on board to bring our Lord's Word through their messages of patience, of hope, of faith, of trust, of love, of redemption, and of salvation found in our Lord Jesus Christ. This was no easy task because of the various obstacles caused by the virus and other developments. We give thanks to these "dedicated Godly pastors" for their service to our congregation and to our Lord Jesus Christ.

However, with diligence, patience, and perseverance, our Call Committee, led by the Holy Spirit, never became discouraged. With faith and hope in our Lord Jesus Christ the Call Committee continued their calls to pastors. Finally, just when the "Proper Time" had fully come, our Lord sent us a Pastor. Nothing can happen at man's will or man's time, but only at our Lord's time. Our Lord is not governed by time, He is the Lord of time.

On the other hand, now is the time to give thanks and praise to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for sending us a Shepherd and to welcome him. We welcome Reverend Thomas Presley, along with his family. May our Lord Jesus Christ continue bless each of us with His love, mercy, and comfort.

In His Service,
Charles Craig
Chairman, Board of Deacons

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.



Stewardship The Gift of Time

I recently read an article in the summer 2024 Harvard Heart Letter entitled, "Take Charge of Your Heart Health". It describes how complex our cardiovascular system is and that there are many moving parts besides our heart. We have over 60,000 blood vessels. This means there are many changes in our heart and cardiovascular system, especially with age.

One section that really caught my attention was, "Is There Such a Thing as a Broken Heart?"

The answer is YES!

Broken Heart Syndrome is a real diagnosis. Extreme physical or emotional stress can cause this to be a problem. The changes that can happen to the heart are similar to a heart attack. Luckily, the damage is usually temporary and leads to no long-term heart damage.

Take for example a person who has suffered the loss of their spouse or partner in life. Or perhaps someone who has lost a child or heir job. Many changes, physically and mentally, happen after such losses. Grief has no timeline and healing is a process. Everyone travels this journey at their own pace. All suffer "Broken Heart Syndrome" to some degree. Luckily, the damage is usually temporary and leads to no long-term heart damage.

Jesus reminds us to take time to show kindness in our words and actions to anyone suffering from stress, sorrow or illness. "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." (John 13:34).

God has given us all gifts of time, talents and treasures. This gift of time is one way we can exercise good stewardship. May we remember to use this gift wisely and generously in helping others.

Lynn Phifer
Council Member-at-Large

LWML News

Painting the Planet Purple with Servanthood

1942-2024 -- 82 YEARS of GOD



September TO REMEMBER

Lutheran Women in Mission's Giving Day:

SEPTEMBER 10, 2024

It's the time of year to give thanks with Lutheran Women in Mission's "September to Remember" Giving Day.

On Tuesday, September 10, 2024, we invite you to donate to the LWML Mission Goal in honor of someone who has made a difference in your life. As you peruse the list of grants funded through the LWML Mission Goal, you will discover organizations whose objectives are clear – in their unique ways, each one honoring God by serving others. We pray the Lord blesses those in need through these mission grants, not only through physical and emotional blessings, but with His saving grace.

The national LWML has been blessed with a \$10,000 matching gift, which means you will have the opportunity to double the impact of your giving on September 10!

Who would you like to honor by donating in their name? As you reflect on this, please watch our social media pages and website for featured personal stories throughout September. Thank you for giving generously to others as He gives to us.

How to donate:

Label your mail with "September to Remember" or "Giving Day" and send to:

LWML

801 Seminary Place, Ste. L010

St. Louis, MO 63105

Or donate online on our website: <https://www.lwml.org/givingday>

Ready to Serve (LWML Sunday Coming in October)

This year's Lutheran Women in Mission Sunday theme is "Ready to Serve" based on Luke 1:38.

And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her (Luke 1:38). More to come.

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

Sheree McGraw, President
First Lutheran LWML

Coming Attractions

Family Game Night is Almost Here!

Let's play BINGO! One of your favorite games is back and ready for family, friends and neighbors of all ages. Gather in the Fellowship Hall on **Tuesday, September 10th at 5:30 pm**. Bingo cards are \$1 per card for the evening

(you can play as many cards as you like). The money raised will be donated to the neighborhood to help with their special projects such as lawn care for the pocket park on Milner Crescent. Small prizes are needed for winning cards - please contact June Weir if you have prizes to donate.



Light refreshments will be provided along with lemonade and water. No reservations are necessary - so bring all your friends!

October Movie Night on the Lawn

Monday, **October 14th** is a holiday, so let's have some extra fun with a movie on the front lawn (weather permitting). Join us at **5:30 pm** on the front lawn, bring a blanket or a bag chair and a friend or two. The popcorn machine will be popping and drinks are free for this event.

Vote for your favorite family-friendly movie to watch at secretary@firstlutheranbham.org. Winner to be announced on October 1st.

If the weather does not cooperate, meet us inside in the Fellowship Hall - where the show will go on!

5th Sunday Potluck Lunch Sunday, September 29



Bring a dish to share and plan to stay after the worship service on September 29 for a potluck lunch. Visit with old friends and make some new ones!



FIRST LUTHERAN STAFF

PASTOR

Rev. Tommy Presley

OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

Rev. Kurtis Schultz

MINISTRY COORDINATORS:

CHRIST CARE

Rev. Tom Lackey

SERVE & CELEBRATE

Lorenza Robinson

FACILITIES & PROPERTIES

Stan Weir

DEACONS / WORSHIP

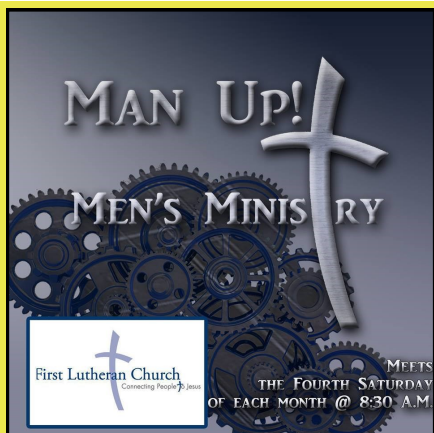
Charles Craig

DIGITAL MEDIA

June Weir

FIRST IMPRESSIONS EDITOR

Heather Lackey



ManUP! Our men's ministry is back in action! This group meets the last Saturday of the month at 8:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. All men are welcome!

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 2024

September 1

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

September 8

Pastor: Tommy Presley
Worship Asst: Charles Craig
Reader: Judy Drews
Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris & James McGraw
Music: Larry Donaldson

September 15

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

September 22

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

September 29

Pastor: Tommy Presley
Worship Asst: Mike Halbrooks
Reader: Henry Mosley
Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris & James McGraw
Music: Larry Donaldson

