

# 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 Holy Words and Sacred Spaces

*"For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."  
- Matthew 18: 20*

What happens on Sunday mornings? I am quite confident that if I asked any of you this question you would be able to respond in detail describing our liturgy, hymns, rituals, and traditions. Some may have even memorized our liturgy and hymns knowing these traditions like the back of their hand. So why would this question be important? Perhaps it even sounds a little silly given everything you know.

*Continued on page 2*

## Local Events

**11/2-3:** 19th Annual Moss Rock Festival, Hoover Metropolitan Complex; [www.mossrockfestival.com](http://www.mossrockfestival.com)

**11/7:** 26th Annual Homewood Holiday Open House, downtown Homewood; [www.homewoodchamber.org](http://www.homewoodchamber.org)

**11/12:** ASO Concertmaster & Friends presents *Viennese Kaleidoscope*, Samford University Brock Recital Hall; [www.alabamasymphony.org](http://www.alabamasymphony.org)

**11/14:** ASO presents Tunes on Tap, The Fenneck; [www.alabamasymphony.org](http://www.alabamasymphony.org)

**11/16:** NUTCRACKER! Magical Christmas Ballet, Alabama Theatre; [www.alabamatheatre.com](http://www.alabamatheatre.com)

**11/19-24:** *Chicago*, presented by The American Theatre Guild, BJCC Concert Hall; [www.americantheatreguild.com/birmingham](http://www.americantheatreguild.com/birmingham)

**11/22-23:** ASO presents *Beethoven + Bartok*, UAB's Alys Stephens Center; [www.alabamasymphony.org](http://www.alabamasymphony.org)



*(cont'd from p. 1)*

Well, unfortunately, in these recent times there seems to be a misunderstanding on the purpose of worship. What do I mean by this? More often than not I hear people describing worship as something that we do for God. We sing, we pray, we read, we listen, we stand, we sit, and all of those things are true! These actions are good, right, and proper for us to do. However, it is important to remember that we are not the main focus of the Divine Service. Let me explain.

Sunday mornings are not about what we can offer God, but what God gives us. The Divine Service is God's service to us in which he blesses us beyond compare and continues to tell the story of how He has rescued us from sin, death, and the devil. That is the point of the Divine Service. Jesus forgives us, guides us, teaches us, and reminds us of His love constantly. Our response to these great gifts the Lord gives us is praise and adoration. Arthur A. Just Jr. in his book *Heaven On Earth* sums it up nicely, "In our worship, Christ, the author of life, is present, telling that story through the words of the prophets and apostles and serving as host of a heavenly feast where the world's story is given its heavenly reality." The only thing that makes the service divine is the presence of Jesus. He alone is the one who hallows our ground and purifies our words.

For the next few months, I plan on writing about several different parts of the Divine Service and show how the heavenly reality of our Lord is made manifest here with us on earth. How wonderful it is that we can shout with confidence, "Our God is with us!" and it be true.

Yours in Christ,

*Pastor Tommy*



## Need to reach Pastor Tommy?

Email [t.presley@firstlutheranbham.org](mailto: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.

## From the President

Have you ever been unsure about an event scheduled at the church? The three-month rolling calendar has been restarted and can be found in the glass case in the hallway leading to the sanctuary. The routine events at the church and Bible studies that are offered online will be designated on the calendar. One-time events that are scheduled between Council Meetings may not be posted on the calendar, but if you have questions about an event, please contact the church office for information. The happenings of the church can also be seen on the church's website by clicking on the view calendar selection.

The Worship Committee has started meeting on the first Tuesday of every month at 10:00AM to plan the worship services for the **following** month. During this meeting sermon topics are defined, hymns are selected, and bulletins are designed. Any announcements for the bulletins need to be submitted by this meeting. With the advent of the broadcast ministry, time has to be allotted to designing the broadcast format, building the slides, and obtaining the music. If you would like to participate in the meeting, please talk to June Weir.

The Church Council will finalize its budget proposal for 2025 at the November 17 council meeting. All budget proposals must be submitted to Francis Robinson prior to this date. A Voters Meeting is scheduled for December 1 for review and approval of the 2025 budget.

In Christ's service,

Glen Thompson  
Congregational President

## Congrats to Dan Phifer!

Chaplain LTC Daniel W. Phifer, US ARMY (retired) has been selected as the Veteran of the Year by the Military Officer Association of America's Greater Birmingham Chapter. Dan served more than 21 years active duty including several US bases, Germany, Asia and Kuwait. He will be honored at an award dinner on November 10.

Happy Veteran's Day to Dan and all the vets in our congregation. We thank you for your service and for the personal sacrifices you made during your military careers.



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

*Evening Prayer*

✠ ENTER IN SILENCE ✠

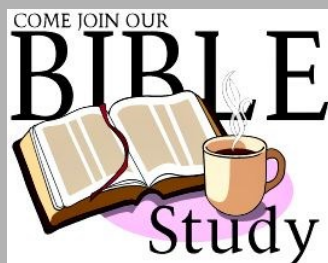
✠ WORSHIP PRAYERFULLY ✠

✠ DEPART IN PEACE ✠



**Man Up! Men's Ministry**

Man Up will take a break in November and December due to the busy holiday season. Please join us when we reconvene in the new year on Saturday, January 25!



**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 [georgearl@hotmail.com](mailto:georgearl@hotmail.com).

## LWML News

### Painting the Planet Purple with Servanthood

*1942-2024 -- 82 YEARS of GOD*



## Thank you, Thank you!!!

The Apostle Paul always thanked the Church in his letters. Family and friends, like the Apostle Paul, I thank God for my Church family. Thank you to the FLC-LWML and the FLC congregation, for your assistance, through your time, talents, and treasures. With your helpful assistance, we hosted a loving reception for Pastor Presley's installation, a celebratory reception for the Presley baby's baptism, and provided gifts and delicious potluck food for Pastor and Tori's baby sprinkle.

I also thank you for your prayers and donations in supporting our LWML Sunday Mission Projects. The FLC-LWML looks forward to our continued fellowship, as we work in service to God our Heavenly Creator.

## To god be the glory!

Finally, the LWML members will not exchange Christmas gifts this year at our Christmas Luncheon. Instead, we will each purchase a gift for the young ladies and girls residing at Grace House. Members of the congregation may purchase gifts as well. Once we receive Grace House's wish lists, we will share it. More information to come during the month of November. Thank you so much for all you do.

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

Serve the **LORD** with gladness.

Sheree McGraw, President  
First Lutheran LWML

## Stewardship

*“Since you have accepted Christ Jesus as Lord, live in union with Him. Keep your roots deep in Him, build your lives on Him, and become stronger in your faith, as you were taught. And be filled with thanksgiving.”*  
- Colossians 2: 6-7

Would you like to live longer? Read on!

Harvard scientists have found another secret to longevity. Their research shows that being "grateful" can lead to a longer life. This study was completed in July 2024 and published online by *JAMA Psychiatry*. What a powerful claim for the month of November, when we celebrate Thanksgiving Day!

Counting our blessings is connected to feeling better emotionally. We also enjoy social well-being and better quality of sleep. The research started in 2016 with 49,000 women (average age 79) who answered questions about being thankful about various aspects of life. The study was observational and doesn't prove that gratitude extends life, but it does show that gratitude brings joy. Give it a try! Each day write down three things you are thankful for. It can be large, such as a friendship or something small like the beautiful fall leaves. We are thankful year-round for the many blessings God gives us daily. We are especially grateful in the month of November when we set aside the fourth Thursday in remembrance and celebration of the 1621 harvest feast shared by the English colonists of Plymouth and the native Wampanoag people of Massachusetts.

May we enjoy our Thanksgiving Day this year with a delicious turkey dinner and time with family and friends. Be thankful!

Lynn Phifer  
Council Member-at-Large



**WORSHIP**

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

## THE STAR is Coming!

Advent begins on Sunday, December 1<sup>st</sup> and it's the season for preparation of Christ's birth. So let's get ready for Christmas! Join us for a special showing of *THE STAR* on Sunday, December 1<sup>st</sup> at 6 pm in the Church Fellowship Hall.

In Sony Pictures Animation's *THE STAR*, a small but brave donkey named Bo yearns for a life beyond his daily grind at the village mill. One day he finds the courage to break free, and finally goes on the adventure of his dreams. On his journey, he teams up with Ruth, a lovable sheep who has lost her flock and Dave, a dove with lofty aspirations. Along with three wisecracking camels and some eccentric stable animals, Bo and his new friends follow the Star and become accidental heroes in the greatest story ever told - the first Christmas.

No admission will be charged—but we're requesting donations for the storm survivors in western North Carolina, South Carolina, and Florida (see food drive article on p. 8). Invite your neighbors, family and friends to attend this movie. It's a fun, new look at the first Christmas.



## Fall Back!

Daylight Saving Time ends  
Sunday, November 3 at 2:00 a.m.

Remember to set your clocks **BACK** one  
hour before bedtime the  
night before.





## GIVE THANKS! Community Food Drive & Free Movie Night!

Time to show thanks for all God's gifts to us. We are holding a community-wide food drive for western North Carolina, South Carolina, and Florida families who survived Hurricanes Helene and Milton. Bring your gratitude to reality by bringing your bountiful donations to First Lutheran Church anytime during November. Then enjoy movie night with free popcorn and bottled water on Sunday

December 1<sup>st</sup> at 6 pm. Non-perishable food items may be dropped off whenever the building is open. Look for the basket in the Fellowship Hall.

If you have a problem deciding what to bring, here is a list of requested items. His blessing abound!

### FOOD DRIVE MOST-NEEDED ITEMS:

We encourage donations to be **HEALTHY, LOW-FAT, LOW-SODIUM, AND LOW-SUGAR non-perishable products.**

- Canned Meat (Chicken, Tuna, Salmon, etc.) - Canned Vegetables (Low/No Sodium Preferred) - Canned Fruit (or Applesauce) - Canned OR Boxed Meals (Chef Boyardee, Beef Stew, etc.) - Boxed Mac & Cheese - Potato Flakes - Peanut Butter (and Other Nut Butter) - Canned OR Dried Beans, Peas, Lentils, etc. - Pasta, Rice, Quinoa (or Other Healthy Carbs) - Breakfast Cereals, Oatmeal, Grits (and Other Breakfast Foods) - 100% Fruit Juice (Canned, Plastic Bottles, or Boxes) - Shelf-Stable Milk (Dairy or Non-Dairy Alternatives such as Oat, Almond, Coconut, etc.) - AND... other healthy non-perishable products!

PLEASE AVOID Sodas, candy, junk food, alcoholic beverages, homemade items, open/used items, items in a glass container, or perishable products. Expired products are not acceptable.

No time to shop? Donations of \$1 will provide 8 meals.

Do you have questions? Please contact Ren Robinson at [lorobins@bellsouth.net](mailto:lorobins@bellsouth.net) or June Weir at [junerweir@gmail.com](mailto:junerweir@gmail.com).





**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

**Birthdays & Anniversaries**



- 11/1: Glen Thompson
- 11/2: Kurtis Schultz
- 11/3: Shane Harris
- 11/4: Anne Allen
- 11/10: Heather Lackey
- 11/12: Larry Donaldson
- 11/16: Jerry Graham
- 11/20: Derek Robinson
- 11/24: Trent Shiflett

- 11/4: Robert & Gwen Regulus
- 11/11: Stan & June Weir
- 11/26: Mali & Anja Mathru

**Worship Team...November 2024**

**November 3**

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

**November 17**

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

**November 10**

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

**November 24**

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



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

