

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 Stand Firm

“So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.” - 2 Thessalonians 2:15

These words of Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy have stood as a bulwark against many heresies throughout the ages, and we would do well to take heed of them now. Why? Because in each and every age there are those who claim to find something “new” or “unique” in Scripture that had been hidden until this point in time, when they discovered it. These false prophets parade their “new” discovery through the streets proclaiming the Lord has given them supernatural insight into the Scriptures fundamentally changing the message of *Continued on page 2*

Local Events

Through 3/29: Birmingham Squadron Basketball, BJCC Legacy Arena; www.birmingham.gleague.nba.com

1/31- 2/2: Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, BJCC Legacy Arena; www.ringling.com

2/4: *Alabama Visions: An Evening of Music by Composers with Alabama Ties*, Samford University Brock Recital Hall; www.alabamasymphony.org

2/6-16: Stephen Sondheim's *ASSASSINS*, Virginia Samford Theatre; www.virginiasamfordtheatre.org

2/11-16: *SIX: The Musical*, BJCC Concert Hall; www.americantheatreguild.com

2/14: *Casablanca*, Alabama Theatre; www.alabamatheatre.com

2/14: *Birmingham Does Broadway!*, Alys Stephens Center; www.alabamasymphony.org

2/14 - 3/2: *SUMMER: The Donna Summer Musical*, Red Mountain Theatre; www.redmountaintheatre.org www.ticketmaster.com



(cont'd from p. 1)

the Gospel and glorifying themselves in the process. Every single age, without fail, the same heresies present themselves with a new coat of paint pretending to be something “new.”

Imagination, invention, and novelty are nothing new to the Christian faith at this point. The naming and exploration of these heresies would be a worthy endeavor and indeed necessary for us to cover in a bible study or special class. But to try and give an exhaustive list here would exceed the limits of a simple newsletter article. That is why I have highlighted the words from 2 Thessalonians. This one sentence is a shield and defense against all heresy and falsehood. We are instructed to cling to the Apostolic teachings of the church and stand firm upon them. Which means that we do not give up ground, entertain false prophets, or compromise on the doctrines of faith that have been handed down to us.

So what must we do? A good question. We pray for those who have been lured away from the true faith and stand firm on the doctrine handed down to us. Firm, not hateful. Knowledgeable, not conceited. Reasonable, not rude. Kind, not boorish. Loving, not compromising. I will leave you with words from our Church Father Cyril of Jerusalem concerning the Creed, “For the articles of faith have not been composed to please human desire, but the most important points collected from the Scriptures make up one complete teaching of the faith. And just as the mustard seed in a small grain contains in embryo many future branches, so also the creed embraces in a few words all the religious knowledge in both the Old and New Testament. Pay attention, therefore, brothers, and cling to the teaching which are now delivered to you, and ‘write them on the tablet of your heart.’”

In Christ,

Pastor Tommy

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.

From Our Congregational President

The church council met January 19 and began planning for 2025. In early February, the technology and broadcast ministry group will develop a calendar of events for the year. The church seasons will be defined and topics for services will begin to evolve. Planning of activities within the congregation and those geared to the surrounding community will begin and will be updated on the church's online calendar. June Weir gave a summary report of the media and technology impact in the community for 2024. Please take time to review the complete report. A copy can be found on the bulleting board. I am including only a brief high-level summary of their activities so that you can get an appreciation of how social media is having an impact on our ability to reach out to people and communicate with them. The number of views for Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube continues to increase. There were 12,800 views on Facebook, 456 views on Instagram, 754 hours watched on YouTube. The number of Google Business Site views increased to over 6,800, Yelp searches doubled to over 400 searches, and there were over 16,000 visits to our website. There is an incredible amount of work that goes into creating our social media and it involves a lot of dedicated people and planning. It starts with the Worship Committee and includes content providers, proofers, layout designers, technical staff, and system administrators to finally broadcast the worship service and to keep the website current. God has truly provided us with talented people and we thank and praise him for the people, their talents, and the resources he has given. The church will continue to review where we can have an impact and will strive to commit resources and develop policies to reach our home bound and expand God's kingdom.

Since Pastor Presley's installation, church activities have increased and organizations are meeting more regularly. Occasionally, double scheduling has occurred. It is important that everyone be aware of what is happening at the church or with other organizations associated with the church and that we avoid scheduling conflicting events or meetings. The online church calendar is a great place to look at scheduled events or meetings. You can access it on the internet by visiting firstlutheranbham.org and clicking on the calendar.

The congregation now has at least five avenues for people to be involved in Bible study. These include the Tuesday women's study meeting on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at 11:00 a.m. in the fellowship hall; Wednesday night online study at 6:30 p.m.; Saturday morning online study at 9:00 a.m.; Man Up Men's group meeting on the last Saturday of the month at 8:30 a.m.; and the Sunday morning study at 9:00 a.m. in the fellowship hall. Each of these studies involves a different topic. I encourage you to take advantage of the opportunity provided by each of the studies to learn and be in fellowship with other people as you are able.

In Christ's service,
Glen Thompson
Congregational President

Ladies Bible Study Returns to Tuesday Mornings!

The beginning of a new year is often filled with resolutions, most people are trying to improve their health and well-being. Many folks overlook their spiritual well-being.

January marks a return of a favorite Bible study group just for women. This group, led by Pastor Tommy Presley, meets on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at 11:00 am in the Fellowship Hall. Our initial focus is a three-part study the Apostles Creed. If you missed any of this study you may find it in the *LWML Quarterly* summer, fall, and winter issues from 2024. Or visit this website: <https://tinyurl.com/2adsdf82>
This study is a great start to a new year of spiritual growth and understanding of the Bible.

Women of the Bible will be our next topic, starting with the Old Testament. Pastor Presley is leading this study as well.

As an added treat, we'll have some fellowship afterwards at noon, so bring a sack lunch. I hope you will join us for a spiritual feast and a healthy lunch. And of course, bring a friend!

June Weir

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

Evening Prayer

✝ ENTER IN SILENCE ✝

✝ WORSHIP PRAYERFULLY ✝

✝ DEPART IN PEACE ✝



Stewardship

February is often referred to as the “Love Month.” February 14th is Valentine’s Day. Lots of flowers, cards, chocolates, and other gifts are bought by one and given to a special person in that one’s life.

The history of the day goes back to the 5th century when Pope Gelasius set this day aside to celebrate the martyred St. Valentine. More history of the day relates to the English poet, Geoffrey Chaucer, who in the 14th century, declared Valentine’s Day as the day when birds choose their mates. This sparked a tradition for lovers to write each other a letter. These letters, or messages were later called “valentines.”

In modern society, February 14th is a day to become engaged. Often, February weddings are planned as close to the 14th as possible. It just goes along with the word, “Love.”

According to Webster’s Dictionary, the word, “love,” as a noun, is defined as, “a strong affection for another,” an attraction or tenderness. As a verb, “love,” is defined as, “to hold dear or to cherish.”

In Psalm 119: 81-88, which is referred to as, “A Prayer for Deliverance”, we read a desperate cry for the Lord to help. The last verse sums it up beautifully. It reads, “Because of Your constant LOVE be good to me, so I may obey Your laws.” In Isaiah 41:10, we read how God loves us without using the word, “love.” It reads, “Do not be afraid — I am with you. I am your God — let nothing terrify you. I will make you strong and help you. I will protect you and save you.”

Let’s relate, “love,” to our Stewardship mission. God has given all of us “time, talents and treasures.” We show our love through our actions to others. Kindness and caring become everyday actions. We conscientiously are looking for ways to help others. We gladly give of our time to help at church, in the neighborhood and with organizations in our community.

God showed His Love for us sinners by allowing His only Son, our Lord, and Savior Jesus Christ to die on the cross in our place for forgiveness of sins and raised Him up to new life so we, too, may share in new life. Praise God!

Thank you, Dear Heavenly Father, for YOUR AMAZING LOVE for us.

Lynn M. Phifer
Council Member at Large

LWML News

Here We Grow



Greetings Brothers and Sisters in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The Women in Mission here at First has had a phenomenal beginning in this New Year.

First, we're planning a visit in the very near future to "Grace House Ministries", our designated local charity by members of the LWML. At that time, we will present a monetary gift. This gift is made possible through the generous donations from the LWML and our church family.

Second, the ladies have scheduled a date this month to continue making prayer bracelets and key chains. These will be used as gifts to visitors and friends of First. At present, we haven't determined a set number of these items. In the future, other items may also be made available.

Finally, the Women's Bible Study initiated by Pastor Presley is officially here. This study session is not only accessible to the LWML but to all ladies interested in an opportunity for fellowship as we study the word of God. We are all looking forward to learning and growing in God's grace.

As always, we seek your support and prayers for success in all of our endeavors.

Frances Burks Foy
President, First Lutheran LWML

2 Peter 3:18 - Growing in God's Grace

WORSHIP

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

Joy of the Lord



Bible Study Opportunities

- Sunday Mornings (in person at First Lutheran) - 9:00 a.m.
- 2nd & 4th Tuesdays - Ladies Bible Study (in person at First Lutheran) - 11:00 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.

Man Up! Men's Ministry

The February Man Up! gathering will take place **Saturday, February 22 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 February 16 so we'll know how many to plan on for breakfast.

Contact Glen Thompson with any questions.





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

WORSHIP/DEACONS

Charles Craig

DIGITAL MEDIA

June Weir

FIRST IMPRESSIONS EDITOR

Heather Lackey

Birthdays & Anniversaries



- 2/3: Desland Robinson
- 2/7: Jana Rotton-Murphy
- 2/8: Matt Allen
- 2/10: Kris Nuss
- 2/21: Christy Hubbard
- 2/22: Everett Robinson
- 2/24: Pat Thompson
- 2/27: Sheree McGraw

2/9: Dan & Lynn Phifer

Worship Team...February 2025

February 2

Pastor: Tommy Presley
 Worship Asst: Robert Regulus
 Reader: Wendy Harris
 Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris & James McGraw
 Music: Larry Donaldson

February 16

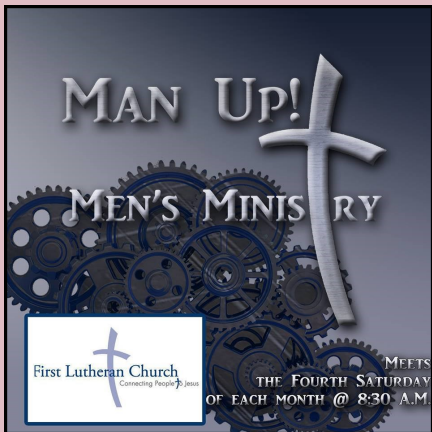
Pastor: Tommy Presley
 Worship Asst: Charles Craig
 Reader: Kevin Kirwin
 Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris & James McGraw
 Music: Becky Schultz

February 9

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

February 23

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



Our men's ministry, Man UP!, meets the last Saturday of the month at 8:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

All men are welcome!

