

# 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 Doubt

Since Genesis 3, doubt has constantly assailed God's people whispering to them the same question the serpent asked so long ago. "Did God really say?" This question is the catalyst for unbelief and all the accompanying emotions. Anger and resentment, sorrow and despair, confusion, and rejection all stem from the question the serpent asked Eve. Did God really say that He would protect you? Did God really say that He would provide for you? Did God really say that He saved you from your sins? Did God really say that those things are even sins at all? Even though throughout time the question has been

*Continued on page 2*

## Local Events

**Through 3/9:** Alabama Ballet presents *Peter Pan*, BJCC Concert Hall; [www.alabamaballet.org](http://www.alabamaballet.org)

**Through 3/29:** Birmingham Squadron Basketball, BJCC Legacy Arena; [www.birmingham.gleague.nba.com](http://www.birmingham.gleague.nba.com)

**3/13-16:** *Godspell Jr.*, Virginia Samford Theatre; [www.virginiasamfordtheatre.org](http://www.virginiasamfordtheatre.org)

**3/15:** St. Patrick's Day 5K and Parade, Five Points South; [www.downtownbhm.com/districts/five-points-south](http://www.downtownbhm.com/districts/five-points-south)

**3/15-16:** Shen Yun, BJCC Concert Hall; [www.shenyun.com/birmingham](http://www.shenyun.com/birmingham)

**3/18:** State Ballet Theatre of Ukraine presents *Swan Lake*, Alabama Theatre; [www.alabamatheatre.com](http://www.alabamatheatre.com)

**3/22:** ASO SuperPOPS! presents *ARETHA: Song & Symphony - A Tribute to a Legend*, BJCC Concert Hall; [www.alabamasymphony.org](http://www.alabamasymphony.org)

**3/25-30:** *Les Misérables*, BJCC Concert Hall; [www.americantheatreguild.com](http://www.americantheatreguild.com)



*(cont'd from p. 1)*

dressed up in different ways by the devil, false prophets, and unbelievers the core premise remains the same. You should question God's Word.

For the Christian, it is quite taboo to talk about doubt. There seems to be air of great fear and disgust when someone brings up questions of doubt or worry they may have. It is as if someone's doubt automatically means that they must not be saved or on the brink of betraying their faith in Christ so they must be excised from the Church in order to not pollute the rest. Brothers and sisters, it should not be this way. While, yes, doubt is a problem to be taken seriously, it should not be met with the hammer of the Law or a prideful superiority complex. Instead, listen to the word of St. Jude, **“And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to other show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.”** Since doubt and unbelief have been with us from the beginning, we should not shy away from speaking about it. Questions should not be treated as unmentionable or prohibited but instead addressed and talked through drawing people back to God's Word. Think about it. How many times does God repeat Himself through the Scriptures? How often does He reassure us, prophecy to us, comfort us, warn us, and guide us? If the Lord must repeat Himself, how much more will we have to do this for one another?

Listen again to the word of St. Jude, **“But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. They said to you, ‘In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.’”** Dear Christian, hear the counsel of St. Jude. Christ and His apostles, the Old Testament Prophets, the martyrs, and saints of our age all remind us of the suffering that we will endure. We live in a fallen world with fallen people. Tragedies both caused by man and caused by nature will befall us and all people. I know it is difficult to look at those and believe in a loving God. However, I implore you to seek counsel where the Lord says it may be found. Namely, His holy Word. He has spoken about these things, the struggles and sufferings of His people, the terrible pain sin causes us, the horrible burden that we must bear sometimes and He does not dismiss those concerns. Instead, Christ points us to the resurrection. Points us to the time where all things will be made right. In mercy, the Lord waits to return so that all may hear the Gospel, and I know the wait is hard. Yet, there is a time that is coming when suffering will cease. Not only that, but God Himself will be the one to wipe away every tear from our eyes and bring us into eternal glory. Cling to this promise. Not only for your sake, but for the sake of your loved ones. For it is not just your tears that will be wiped away, but every tear of your friends and family. As we wait, let us then continue to build one another up and deal with each other in mercy.

In Christ,

*Pastor Tommy*

## From Our Congregational President

The Lenten Season begins on March 5 and goes on to April 20 with the celebration of Easter. Each Wednesday evening there will be a midweek Vespers Service at 6:00 PM. On Ash Wednesday the imposition of ashes will precede the service. The Wednesdays from March 12 through April 9, a meal will be provided at 5:15 PM. Different organizations and individuals in the church will host the meals (3/12-LWML, 3/19-Lorenza Robinson, 3/26-Christy Hubbard, 4/2-Stan and June Weir, and 4/9-Deacons). I encourage everyone to attend and enjoy the food and fellowship. You are also encouraged to invite friends and relatives to share the season with us. If you would like to help with a meal, contact the sponsoring group or family to volunteer. During Holy Week we will not have a Wednesday evening service but will celebrate Maundy Thursday on April 17, Tenebrae on Good Friday April 18, Easter Vigil on Saturday April 19, and Easter Sunday on April 20.

This year we are adding the Easter Vigil service to Holy Week. The vigil service is a time “to keep watch.” It is a time set aside for attentive waiting and prayer. It is a service that has appointed readings which are full of contrasts: light and dark, good and evil, punishment and mercy. They tell stories of the Lord’s salvation for His people in the past and point ahead to what Jesus has done for us and all the world now in his death and resurrection. The Easter Vigil service acts as a bridge between the reflective season of Lent and the joyful season of Easter, connecting Good Friday to Easter Sunday. The services on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday will begin at 6:00 PM. The Easter Vigil service will be around 2 hours long.

Recently the Church Council was asked to approve the dispersal of cremated remains of a prior member on the church’s property. After thoughtful study and discussion, the Council approved a policy of allowing the wide distribution of cremated remains of a member or former member of the church. The Council approved the hillside beside the church as the designated area for the distribution. The pastor is to be consulted and an appropriate committal service should be held prior to or during the distribution. No cremated remains will be accepted by the church or maintained on the property other than through a dispersal committal.

In Christ’s service,  
Glen Thompson  
Congregational President

**It's Time for Fifth Sunday Potluck !**

**Sunday, March 30**

**In the Fellowship Hall after Worship Service**

**Bring a dish to share!**



**CONTACT  
information**



**Need to reach Pastor Tommy?**

Email [t.presley@firstlutheranbham.org](mailto:t.presley@firstlutheranbham.org) or call the church at 205.933.0380 and press 5 when prompted to "select from the following menu." 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 ✝





## Lenten Midweek Schedule

### Wednesday, March 5

Ash Wednesday Service - 6:00 p.m.

*Imposition of Ashes will precede the service.*

### Wednesdays, March 12 - April 9

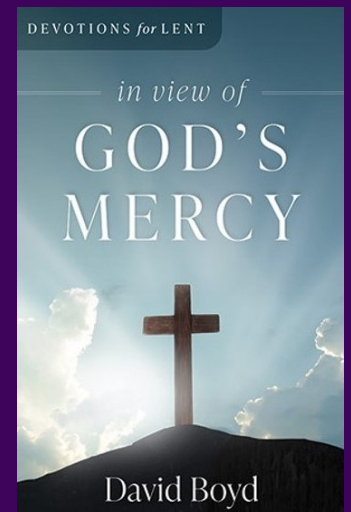
Dinner - 5:15 p.m.

Vespers Service - 6:00 p.m.

## Lent Devotions

Join us and our friends from Unity and St. Paul Lutheran Churches for our daily Lenten Devotionals. These are available every day on Facebook and YouTube. If you like what you see, please share with family and friends!

These adult short devotionals are taken from David Boyd's series *In View of God's Mercy*. Lent is a season when we take a look at our lives in view of God's mercy toward us in the sacrifice of His Son for us on the cross.



## LWML News



Tis the season for Easter bunnies and chocolate candy. How about those little Peeps? Isn't this what advertisers would have us believe?

How about we think this through a bit more. Isn't this season about how our Lord Jesus saved us?

The book of Nahum tells the story of Nineveh. This city had fallen so far from God that total destruction was required. A brief reprieve had been granted after warnings from Jonah. But the people returned to their evil ways. The destruction was so complete that it has never been rebuilt. In the midst of this rubble there were those that glowed and remained faithful and trusted in God. These were comforted (Nahum 1:7).

In these days of Lent, we fast and pray asking for forgiveness, grace, mercy and comfort. We are in the midst of the rubble and we repent with the help of the Holy Spirit. Let's heed the warning in Luke 13:10 — repent or perish.

Please, join the Lutheran Women's Missionary League here at First Lutheran as we serve our Lord through our mission projects. As always, we seek your prayers and support in all of our endeavors.

Frances Burks Foy  
President, First Lutheran LWML

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



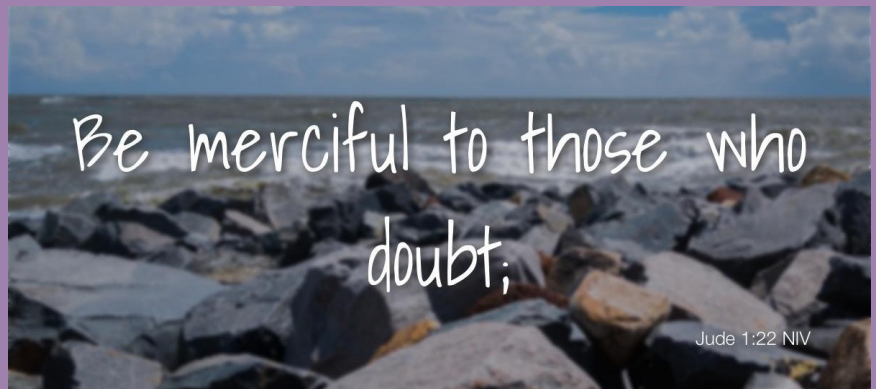
## Reminder

Daylight Saving Time begins **Sunday, March 9**  
at 2:00 a.m. Be sure to set your clocks **AHEAD** one hour before  
going to bed the night of the 8th.

## WORSHIP

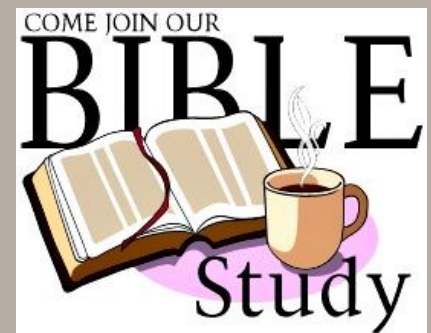
Worship with us Sundays at 10:15 a.m. in person  
or online via Facebook or YouTube.

# 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](mailto:georgeearl@hotmail.com).

## Man Up! Men's Ministry

The March Man Up! gathering will take place **Saturday, March 29 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 March 23 so we'll know how many to plan on for breakfast. Contact Glen Thompson with any questions.



## Stewardship

God has given each of us time, talents, and treasures. May we use them to HIS glory.

March is a month with a few significant dates. Ash Wednesday is the 5<sup>th</sup>; the Ides of March is the 15<sup>th</sup>; St Patrick's Day is the 17<sup>th</sup> and the first day of spring is the 20<sup>th</sup>.

Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent, a 40-day period of fasting and prayer before the celebration of Easter. This year it falls on March 5.

The Ides of March is the day that Julius Caesar was assassinated in 44 BC. Mark 12:17 reads, "So Jesus said, "Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, to God what belongs to God." Wow! That one Bible verse sums up Stewardship!

On the 17<sup>th</sup> we recall the life of St. Patrick. He was a missionary and bishop in Ireland in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. He is considered the patron saint of Ireland and is credited with spreading Christianity throughout the region. He was born in Britian, and his birth name was Maewyn Succat. After a six-year enslavement, which he called, "God's test of faith," where he was in constant prayer, he became a Christian figure in the Catholic faith. St. Patrick died in 461 A.D. on March 17<sup>th</sup> which is referred to as his "Feast Day". This day is celebrated annually throughout the Christian world.

The first day of spring is centered around the spring equinox. This is the exact moment when the earth's axis and its orbit line up so that both the northern and southern hemispheres get an equal amount of sunlight. Ecclesiastes 3:2, reads, there "is a time for planting". We plant our flowers and vegetables in the spring. Psalm 1:1-3 (paraphrased), Happy are those who obey God's laws. They will grow like a tree along the streams of water. They succeed in everything they do.

We prepare to celebrate Jesus' gift of forgiveness and eternal life during Easter. What a glorious thought to be thanking God for the gift of His Son.

Dear Heavenly Father,

We thank you for your forgiveness and your gift of eternal life.

Lynn M. Phifer  
Council Member at Large



## Have You Visited First Lutheran's Website?

It's a dandy site to find lots of information—and it is all at your fingertips! Check it out on your computer or cell phone at [www.FirstLutheranBham.org](http://www.FirstLutheranBham.org). Why is this handy? Find information on special events, LWML, Man-Up, or bios on our Pastor and leadership team. There is a menu at the top of the screen and the calendar is located at the bottom. Just point and click on the topic and you have all the details!

Our website offers a link for prayer requests, a place for online special donations, and a full calendar. You can find Pastor's article, *First Impressions*, our monthly newsletter, our church history, and much more. You can see the details on every stain glass window in the Church on our site.

Visitors will find links to our live stream broadcasts and our Lenten devotionals recorded by our members. Whatever you need to know, times of worship services, special events, directions to the church—you can find it here. Use your phone to scan the QR code on the bulletin or Church sign for a shortcut to the website. How easy is that? You don't need to key in the web address!

Every time you visit our website it helps to elevate our website on the list of Google searches. The more frequently searched sites will appear higher in the results. Someone new to Birmingham will find information on First Lutheran Church in the top tier even when searching for "church" or "Lutheran church" near me.

So please help this effort by visiting our website and "bookmark" the site. You can add the website to your favorites list on your computer. If you need help, just ask.

A website is a great communication tool. And like all information, it must be current to be of value. So, if you need to update your group's activities, change or add a date, please let us know. Contact Ginger Reeves at [gingerareeves@gmail.com](mailto:gingerareeves@gmail.com), June Reeves-Weir at [junerweir@gmail.com](mailto:junerweir@gmail.com), or Heather Lackey at [hlackey10@gmail.com](mailto:hlackey10@gmail.com).

The screenshot shows the homepage of the First Lutheran Church website. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for About Us, Liturgical Calendar, Visitors, Ministries, Online Giving, Newsletter, Resources, and Contact Us. The main content area features a large banner with the text "From now on you will be catching people." and a blue fish icon. To the left of the banner is a green box with the text "Do Not Be Afraid" and the date "2/9/2025". Below the banner is a "Create prayer request" button. To the right of the banner is contact information for First Lutheran Church, including the address "2502 Highland Avenue S, Birmingham, AL 35205", phone number "205-933-0380", and email "secretary@firstlutheranbham.org". There are also social media icons for Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. Below the banner is a section titled "Stay Connected" with social media icons. At the bottom, there is a calendar for "Saturday, February 22, 2025 - Saturday, March 1, 2025". The calendar lists events for Saturday, February 22, 2025: Men-Up (8:00 AM), Bible Study with Rev. George Murlaugh via Zoom (9:00 AM), and Sunday, February 23, 2025: Sunday School (9:00 AM) and Worship, Face to Face and Online Streaming (10:15 AM).



**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**



- 3/3: Miriam Brown
- 3/10: Teresa Murdaugh
- 3/11: Wayne Speegle
- 3/12: Ginger Reeves
- 3/16: Eva Hill
- 3/18: Henry Allen
- 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 2025**

**March 2**

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

**March 23**

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

**March 9**

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

**March 30**

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

**March 16**

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



**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!**

