

# 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 Hero of Heroes

*"Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?"*

- Luke 24:26

He is Risen! Our joyful refrain this Eastertide. This proclamation is our confession of who Jesus is and what he has done. Jesus is the risen one. Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus is our savior. As I am sure you have heard me say in several sermons, the resurrection proves Jesus has been telling the truth his entire ministry. Every claim, every miracle, every prophecy rests on the cornerstone of our risen Lord.

*Continued on page 2*

## Local Events

**Through 6/1:** Birmingham Stallions Football, Protective Stadium;  
[www.theufl.com](http://www.theufl.com)

**Through 9/14:** Birmingham Barons Baseball, Regions Field;  
[www.milb.com/birmingham](http://www.milb.com/birmingham)

**Through 10/25:** Birmingham Legion Soccer, Protective Stadium; [www.bhmlegion.com](http://www.bhmlegion.com)

**5/2-4:** Children's of Alabama Indy Grand Prix, Barber Motorsports Park;  
[www.indyalabama.com](http://www.indyalabama.com)

**5/14-18:** Regions Tradition, Greystone Golf and Country Club; [www.regionstradition.com](http://www.regionstradition.com)

**5/17:** Do Dah Day, Cahaba Brewing Company; [www.dodahday.org](http://www.dodahday.org)

**5/20-25:** SEC Baseball Tournament, Hoover Metropolitan Stadium; [www.secsports.com](http://www.secsports.com)

**5/23-25:** Symphony in the Summer, Railroad Park; [www.alabamasymphony.org](http://www.alabamasymphony.org)

**5/30 - 6/29:** Disney's Frozen, the Broadway Musical; Red Mountain Theatre;  
[www.redmountaintheatre.org](http://www.redmountaintheatre.org)



*(cont'd from p. 1)*

The cornerstone of truth itself. There is a reason that the truth we confess has been called the “Greatest Story Ever Told.” Every hero’s journey that came before and every hero’s journey to come can only imitate the story of Jesus. Whether that story be grounded in fact or fiction, fantastical or grim, the story of Jesus will always prevail as the standard. For Jesus is the hero of heroes. Jesus is the righteous one who faced down the most unimaginable odds endured the greatest suffering to win the ultimate victory. And He did it all for us. A selfless journey to save the people He loved rescuing them from evil itself so that they too would live with Him forever in paradise. You just can’t write it any better.

However, let me remind you that this is not just a story for us. This is the cornerstone of truth. Jesus is not a fictional hero but a real one. His legacy isn’t just codified in stone or song, brush or book but etched into our very hearts and souls. Our hero didn’t stay dead. Our hero rose to life eternal and took His place in glory at the right hand of the Father. Our hero still comes to us in Word and Sacrament even to this day. Jesus isn’t a dead relic to remember but a living King to exalt. And perhaps, brothers and sisters in Christ, one of greatest things we can hear is that this Hero of Heroes, this King of Kings, knows your name and loves you. Jesus made that hero’s journey for you.

*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 press 5 when prompted to “select from the following menu.” This will connect you directly to him at any time.

## From Our Congregational President

The Southern District had its' triennium convention in March in Slidell, LA. During the convention, the Synod President and the District President gave reports on the state of the church. Elections for district offices were held and Stan Weir from our congregation was elected as a member-at-large for the District Board of Directors. Additionally, there were sessions involving mission outreach, church growth, and programs offered by recognized service organizations (RSO's) in the greater church organization.

I had the privilege of attending the synod convention held in July 2024 in Milwaukee, WI and the district convention held in March 2025 in Slidell, LA. This was the first time I had attended either convention and I found them both to be very interesting.

As you are aware, there are few Lutheran churches in the South and little fellowship occurs between the churches. From attending the conventions, I found there are opportunities available to us that we can utilize. Below I have highlighted a limited number of opportunities you may want to explore and potentially participate in.

1. The Southern District has a goal of training 500 lay missionaries. The district has an initiative to train 500 people to share the gospel through an online training program at no cost to the participant. This is not a church growth program but a share the gospel program to bring more people to Christ. If you are interested visit the Southern District website at [www.southernlcms.org](http://www.southernlcms.org) and review The Missionary Pathway.
2. Lutheran Early Response Team (LERT) – This is an organization lead by Pastor Paul Ernewein in the Southern District that responds to natural disasters throughout the country. It is part of the larger LCMS Disaster Response program. Training is provided to equip volunteers in their desired role. Some roles include cooking, tree cutting, skilled trades (carpentry, electrical, plumbing), spiritual care, damage assessment, shelter management, volunteer coordination, and medical services. Basic LERT classes and chainsaw operation classes have been scheduled for May and June in the district. Grace Lutheran in Huntsville is hosting basic training on May 9 and chainsaw operation on May 10. The Southern District office in Slidell, LA will have a basic class on May 3 and a chainsaw class on May 16 and 17. See me if you would like to attend.

*(cont'd on p. 4)*

*(President's Letter - cont'd from p. 3)*

3. Lutheran Church Charities (LCC) – LCC exists as a partner and resource to individual LCMS churches to share the mercy, compassion, presence, and proclamation of Jesus Christ. LCC can help garner resources to provide care for individuals or families by working through the local church. They can equip a church to develop a Care Team and expand the church's reach through community engagement. For more information visit their website [www.lutheranchurchcharities.org](http://www.lutheranchurchcharities.org).
4. Southern District Church Extension Fund (SDCEF) and Legacy Deo – The SDCEF provides affordable loans to LCMS congregations for new facilities, additions, professional worker primary residence, and capitol improvements. In addition, on the investor side, it provides CDs at a competitive interest rate. The fund also has demand accounts and save by mail accounts. For more information see their website at [www.southerncef.org](http://www.southerncef.org).

Legacy Deo is an organization founded by the Texas District LCMS that is dedicated to managing charitable gifts to provide a perpetual base of funding for various ministries. They accept cash and non-cash gifts which they convert to cash for a ministry. In 2024, an anonymous donor of First Lutheran established an account for the church with a \$10,000 donation. Anyone can make additional contributions to this account. When the account reaches a minimum of \$100,000, the church will start receiving 4% of the endowment's assets annually. This money would go back into the treasury to support the church's ministry. Please consider making memorial, estate, or other gifts to this fund. Deposits can be made by designating a gift and placing it in with your weekly offering or directly by going to Legacy Deo's website [www.legacydeo.org/give/donate](http://www.legacydeo.org/give/donate).

I hope you will consider some of these ways to participate in the broader church.

In Christ's Service,  
Glen Thompson, Congregational President



## LWML News

*John 1:1-5*

Greetings Brothers and Sisters in Christ.



We are happy to report receiving a lovely thank you letter from St. Jude's Children's Hospital, one of our 2024 mission projects. We praise God for this new season as we continue to pray for guidance in selecting our missions for 2025.

At our most recent meeting we were graced with a presentation from Pastor Murdaugh regarding a mission in India. This mission, Chirala Medical Trust, has a multi-fold ministry in teaching the word of God as well as providing for health care and other needs. This includes church planting, pastoral training and increasing nursing education to a four-year degree.

We are also considering supporting a young lady in mission in Zambia, Africa as she serves women and girls. Her ministry involves teaching health education and awareness of human trafficking. She will also assist teachers in preparing the women for higher education.

The two aforementioned would be our international missions. Please keep these missions in prayer as they seek to spread the Good News. We are in prayer regarding our final selection of National and Local mission projects.

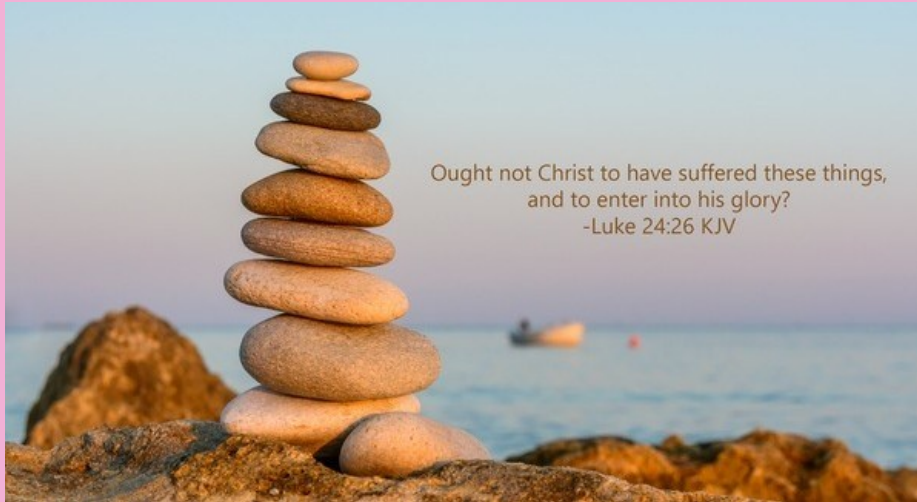
Yes, we have lofty goals but through prayer, faith and perseverance, we believe these will be met. In the near future we will share some of our fund-raising projects to support these goals.

As always, we seek your support and prayers in meeting our goals. We remain committed to serving the Lord with gladness through mission.

Frances Burks Foy  
President, First Lutheran LWML

# WORSHIP

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

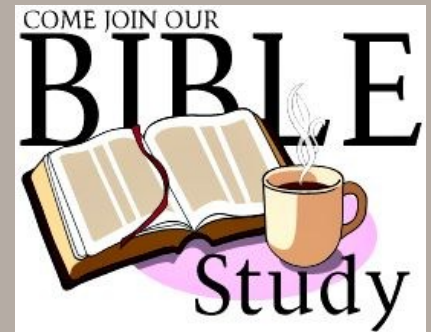


Ought not Christ to have suffered these things,  
and to enter into his glory?  
-Luke 24:26 KJV

*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 May Man Up! gathering will take place **Saturday, May 31 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 May 25 so we'll know how many to plan on for breakfast. Contact Glen Thompson with any questions.



## Stewardship

Mother's Day is May 11, 2025, this year. Traditionally, it is the second Sunday in May.

It began in the early 20th century here in the U.S. by the efforts of Anna Jarvis. Anna wanted to recognize her mother, Ann Reeves Jarvis, after her death so she campaigned for a national holiday to honor mothers. During her life, Anna's mother organized "Mother's Day Work Clubs" to improve sanitation and public health. Later she worked on "Mother's Friendship Day" to promote reconciliation after the Civil War. President Woodrow Wilson officially recognized Mother's Day in 1914. He signed a bill at Andrews Methodist Episcopal Church.

Today we recognize Mother's Day with greeting cards and flowers and special gratitude for our own mothers. This makes the holiday very special, as not every woman is a mother, but most everyone has or has had a mother or mother figure in their lives. If our mother has passed away and is now in heaven, she is remembered and honored on this day. If she is living, we call her, visit, give her cards, flowers, and most importantly, hugs, kisses, and words of thankfulness.

Let us remember to use our Stewardship gifts of "Time, Talents and Treasures" wisely. The Bible tells us to love our mothers. The fourth commandment says, "Honor your father and mother." Our Lord loved His mother, Mary. He provided her security and love when He told her at "The Cross", that John was her son and told John that Mary was his mother. (John 19: 26-27). We each have a story about our mother. Share your story with others. My mother was German and was the youngest of ten children. She was strict! She needed a good reason to smile or laugh. She told you the truth, even if it hurt! She was also kind, supportive, and generous. I remember her giving food to poor people. She would take hot coffee to the farm workers in the field. She taught Sunday School and was a Girl Scout Leader. She attended our school music concerts and sports events. We never missed church or Sunday School, unless we were *very* sick!

Whether your mother (or surrogate mother) is living or has passed away, we remember her with thanksgiving, especially on May 11. Our actions are a witness to others. We are evangelists and are sharing the Gospel, the good news of Jesus' love for each of us.

With thankfulness for our mothers and surrogate mothers,

Lynn M. Phifer  
Council Member at Large

## Sprinkle Ashes for Frances

Frances Elizabeth Sweidom Decker was born April 22, 1908 in Texas and died in Birmingham, Alabama on September 23, 2005. She was raised in a Lutheran family and was a long-time member of First Lutheran Church in Birmingham, AL. She is survived by a daughter Joyce Ilene Decker and a son, Randolph Terrance Decker. She was preceded in death by a son, Maurice Francis Sonner and husband Louis Ralph Decker, Jr.

Frances worked in retail and accounting. She was a dear friend of Hazel and CJ Scheinert, who were also long-time members of First. As she was estranged from her children, Frances became close to David Higgins and Judy Drews. Frances gave her body to science at UAB and was cremated. Reverend Nathan Schuetz officiated at her funeral service; the sermon text was Revelation 21:4.

On May 25, 2025, her ashes will be spread on the right-hand hill in the front yard of First Lutheran Church, after the morning worship service. All are welcome to participate if interested.

Judy Drews

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

*Evening Prayer*

✝ **ENTER IN SILENCE** ✝

✝ **WORSHIP PRAYERFULLY** ✝

✝ **DEPART IN PEACE** ✝





## What's New in the Library?

Good news! There are many new additions to the First Lutheran Library. We now have the complete set of the Jan Karon's Midford series and a few of her children's books. You will love to read this one to your children, *Jeremy*, *The Tale of an Honest Bunny*.

New books have a bright yellow bookmarker that identifies these as new additions. You will find all categories of books ranging from light reading to resources for Bible study.



Our library is now open anytime the building is open. Books are available for “self-checkout,” just follow the instructions on the desk. There is a generous 3 weeks for taking a book out of the library and a convenient return box in the hallway next to the library.

Donations to the Library are welcomed! Our goal is to expand the children's reading section for young children and teens. If you have books to donate, these must meet the library's criteria. Please check with Carol Melton or June Weir if you have donations. The Library Selection Policy will provide our guidelines.

### Selection Policy:

The Library Committee firmly believes that an attractive church Library will attract users. The condition of library materials remains a constant focus. New, current materials will be added as funds allow based on the Selection Policy stated here. Current useful and desirable secular classics may be retained if in good shape, and still in popular demand, but monetary resources will be spent primarily on Christian materials. The library will not try to duplicate public library resources since our area has an abundance of public libraries from which to select secular materials. The Children's Collection will emphasize materials with a Christian family emphasis.

Christian bookstores and religious sections of other bookstores – Every effort will be made to purchase items which fit into the theology and spiritual goals of the Christian faith, and Lutheran theology when using non-denominational bookstores. Pastor will be called upon when titles are in question.

Recommendations from members are welcomed. We will evaluate and purchase the requested item if the material meets a need at the time of request; funds are available, and/or fit into the mission of the library under the selection policy.



## 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



5/1: Margaret Golden

5/5: Mali Mathru

5/6: Mandy Nuss

5/12: Dorothy Sims

5/17: James Melton

5/17: Kelsey Washington

5/18: Charlie Hayes

5/28: Sophia Rotton

5/21: Kris & Mandy Nuss

5/23: Tommy & Tori Presley

## Worship Team...May 2025

### May 4

Pastor: Tommy Presley

Worship Asst: Robert Regulus

Communion Asst: Glen Thompson

Reader: Frances Robinson

Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris &

James McGraw

Music: Larry Donaldson

### May 18

Pastor: Tommy Presley

Worship Asst: Anthony McGraw

Communion Asst: Stan Weir

Reader: Eva Hill

Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris &

James McGraw

Music: Larry Donaldson

### May 11

Pastor: Tommy Presley

Worship Asst: Mike Halbrooks

Communion Asst.: Henry Mosley

Reader: Wendy Harris

Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris &

James McGraw

Music: Larry Donaldson

### May 25

Pastor: Tommy Presley

Worship Asst: Henry Mosley

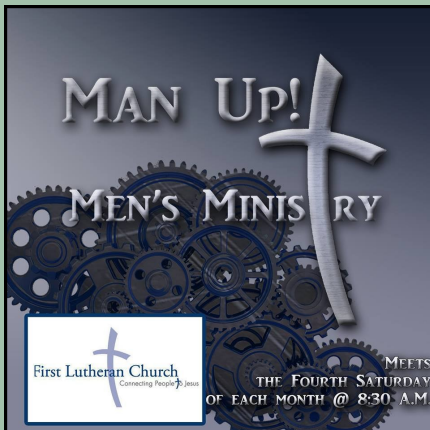
Communion Asst: Mike Halbrooks

Reader: Kevin Kirwin

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!**

