

# FIRST Impressions

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A Publication of First Lutheran Church • Birmingham, AL

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[View our Church Calendar](#)



## Pastor's Pen Run the Race

If you have heard me preach before, you will notice that I often talk about *trying* when it comes to the law. As in, we should try to follow the law of the Lord and do our best to live perfectly. An unobtainable goal but one we should strive for nonetheless. St. Paul says in 1 Corinthians, **“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it.”** That may sound like works righteousness, but that isn't the point St. Paul is making. He is encouraging the people of Corinth to take their faith seriously. Just as seriously as those who train to win the prize. Run the race. Why? Because God knows

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## Local Events

**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)

**Through 11/30:** *Silver & Ceremony from Southern Asia, 1830-1930*, Birmingham Museum of Art; [www.artsmbma.org](http://www.artsmbma.org)

**Saturdays through 12/13:** The Market at Pepper Place; [www.pepperplacemarket.com](http://www.pepperplacemarket.com)

**9/3-21:** *Wicked*, BJCC Concert Hall; [www.americantheatreguild.com](http://www.americantheatreguild.com)

**9/6:** CahabaQue Tailgate Challenge, Cahaba Brewing Company; [www.cahabaque.com](http://www.cahabaque.com)

**9/10:** James Taylor in concert, Coca-Cola Amphitheater;  
[www.amphitheaterbirmingham.com](http://www.amphitheaterbirmingham.com)

**9/26-27:** *Fate & Fury: Beethoven's Fifth*, UAB's Alys Stephens Center;  
[www.alabamasymphony.org](http://www.alabamasymphony.org)



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how difficult it is to be faithful.

With any task in life there is a certain level of discipline that we must have to see it through. There will be days when we don't want to do things we are supposed to do, where we are burnt out, where we are resentful or selfish, where the suffering becomes too much to bear. You know this. That is why we strive in faith to obtain the prize. I was often told in my youth that, "Champions are made in the off season." I come to know this to be true. Whatever you do while training translates to the game. Likewise, our spiritual discipline helps us when the worst of life comes. We don't run to obtain salvation; Jesus has already given this to us as a free gift. We run to guard it and keep it close. Just as St. Paul says in the final verse of 1 Corinthians chapter 9, **"But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified."** Guard the gift given to you brothers and sisters. Run the race.

In Christ,

*Pastor Tommy*

## Rally Day 2025

First Lutheran Church will observe Rally Day on September 7, 2025. This Sunday marks the beginning of a new calendar year in our church and also begins our renewed Christian education program for the coming year.

A delicious pancake breakfast at 8:00 a.m. begins the day of fun and encouragement with our theme being "Rally Day Kickoff!" and our message being "Score One for God!" **You are encouraged to wear your favorite team's paraphernalia be it pro, college, high school or any other.**



As we begin a new year we pray our studies will increase our faith, that our fellowship will cause us to live as brothers and sisters in Christ, and that our time gathering for worship and prayer will enrich our spirits. Get this church year off to a great year serving the Lord and glorifying God!

S.H.A.P.E. "Come & See!"



## From the President

On August 11, we recognized the one-year anniversary of Pastor Presley becoming our new pastor and shepherd. We thank God for choosing him for us. He is a dynamic teacher and preacher. I encourage everyone to be involved in at least one of his Bible studies or classes that he leads.

On Saturday September 6, the church will have a long-range planning meeting in the fellowship hall between 9:00AM and 1:00PM. The congregation is invited to attend and participate in the discussions. During the meeting we will look back and see what we have accomplished over the past three years. We will then look at the demographics around the church, discuss our strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities. We will finish the meeting by defining our direction for the 2025-2026 church year, and by looking at plans for the next five and ten years. Please come and participate!

Following the Saturday long range planning meeting, on Sunday September 7 we will kick off the church year with Rally Day. The day will start with a pancake breakfast and be followed with the start of our educational programs for all ages.

This year Pastor Presley will be teaching not only the adult Sunday morning Bible study but will also be teaching the Women's Bible Study on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of the month and the adult catachesis class on Wednesday evenings. The catachesis class is open to anyone wanting to learn more about the Lutheran beliefs.

Pastor Murdaugh will be leading two separate Bible studies online. One of the studies meets on Wednesday evenings and the other on Saturday mornings. Please contact Pastor Murdaugh for the Zoom link.

Pastor Lackey will lead the Men's Bible Study each month, held in conjunction with the ManUp meetings which are on the last Saturday of each month. All men are welcome to attend.

You are encouraged to take advantage of each of these excellent classes.

Glen Thompson, Congregational President

## LWML Selects 2025 Mission Projects



This summer has been a busy one for Lutheran Women in Mission (LWML) as we prayerfully selected our new mission projects for this year. Traditionally, we select an international project, a national project and a local project. However, this year we had two outstanding international projects, one sponsored by Pastor George Murdaugh and another sponsored by Tori Presley. Both projects were wonderful opportunities to further the love and compassion of Christ. So, we followed our hearts and selected both—this is the first! We have set a higher goal to support the international and national projects at \$1,000 each and the local project at \$500.

In the photo below, fifth from the left, is Amanda Epperson, receiving our donation of \$1,000 for One Collective.



### 2025 Mission Projects

**One Collective:** Amanda Epperson will spend 3 years in **Zambia** specifically working with women. Amanda travels to Zambia this fall where she will be working at the community school mentoring teachers, directing a student scholarship program and teaching Women's Empowerment which includes setting boundaries, grooming, trafficking prevention and awareness, abuse education, and self-defense. Amanda will need ongoing support over the next three years to cover her expenses. You may make individual donations at her personal giving link:

<https://give.onecollective.org/30US3842>

### Baer Christian Hospital Project, India

In 1909, Dr. Mary Baer, a Lutheran medical missionary to Indian was able to collect funding to begin medical work in a thatched-roofed hospital in Chirala, Andhra Pradesh, India, on the grounds of St. Mark Lutheran Mission. This effort grew into a hospital named the Baer Christian Hospital.

In the 1970s a lack of funding due to missionary withdrawals from the region, neglect from local Christian churches, the convergence of building deterioration and the political climate resulted in Baer Memorial Hospital (BCH) closing its doors, except for a small independent nursing school in the old clinic.

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Currently BCH is moving forward with establishing a Nursing College on its campus, 2 (two) Christian medical schools—one in Punjab state and another in Tamil Nadu state—will provide teachers and support staff by extension to the 4-year degreed nursing program.

Please add BCH and the CM&E Trust to your prayers so that work there may continue to reach more people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Since work began in Chirala, more than half a million have been served in the name of Jesus Christ. For more information about the CM&E Trust visit:

[www.chiralamedicaltrust.org](http://www.chiralamedicaltrust.org).

**WorshipAnew:** Lutheran Ministries Media produces a weekly, 30-minute Lutheran broadcast worship service called "Worship Anew." This service was founded in 1980, and is currently headquartered at the Concordia Theological Seminary at Ft Wayne, IN. You can follow WorshipAnew on Facebook, Vimeo, Spotify, YouTube and TCT. And you can subscribe to the Broadcaster magazine for free! This is a great resource for aging adults and their caregivers - as well as churches who are working with older adults. More information is available by emailing [info@worshipanew.org](mailto:info@worshipanew.org)

**Ronald McDonald House in Birmingham** is our local charity for this year. Many of you are familiar with this home away from home located near the Children's Hospital of Alabama.

The House is open 24/7 for guest families and their children. Ronald McDonald House Charities of Alabama (RMHCA) provides essential services to remove barriers, strengthen families, and promote healing when children require medical care. The 73-room Ronald McDonald House and Family Room at UAB Women & Infants Center offer families a place to stay near the hospital, helping them save more than \$7.4 million annually in food and lodging costs.

Our commitment to RMHCA will be financially supported with Thrivent Cares funds and includes our volunteer services with the members of First Lutheran's LWML (Lutheran Women in Mission).



WORSHIP

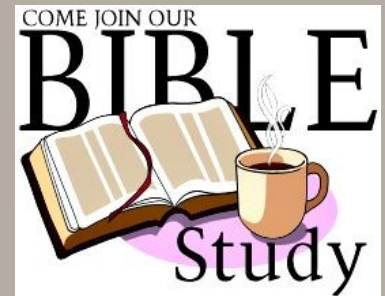
Worship with us Sundays at 10:15 a.m. in person  
or online via Facebook or YouTube.



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. - **RETURNING SEPT. 9**
- Wednesday Evenings - Adult Catechesis and Potluck Dinner (in person at First Lutheran) - 6:00 p.m. - **STARTS SEPT. 10**
- Wednesday Evenings (via Zoom) - 6:30 p.m.
- Saturday Mornings (via Zoom) - 8:00 a.m.— **NOTE EARLIER TIME**



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 September Man Up! gathering will take place **the last Saturday in September (September 27) 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 21** so we'll know how many to plan on for breakfast. Contact Glen Thompson with any questions.



## Casting Call for Video Volunteers

Do you love to tell a story? Have maybe 30 minutes or so to share your time? Then we need you! Plans are underway to record a new devotion series for Advent and Lent later in September.

The devotions will be on a computer screen for you to read while we record you. Yes, it is that easy. Just contact [JuneRWeir@gmail.com](mailto:JuneRWeir@gmail.com) to volunteer and pick your day and time to record.

And don't worry about being perfect -- our video editor can smooth out the glitches! This is a super opportunity to share your time and talents.



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

*Evening Prayer*

✠ ENTER IN SILENCE ✠

✠ WORSHIP PRAYERFULLY ✠

✠ DEPART IN PEACE ✠



## Stewardship

We know “Stewardship” relates to using our time, talents and treasures given to us as gifts from God. I was reading a newsletter from First Lutheran Church in Nashville, TN when I noticed the words under the church heading. It read, “Connecting People to Jesus.” I thought about connectivity, connecting, or reaching out to others. How do we do this? By being good stewards we reach out, connect and help other people.

We show our love to others because Jesus loves us. We have many advertisements on TV. They usually last about seven minutes! Recently I wondered what made these ads so appealing. I paid attention to four that spoke to me of love. I will briefly describe them: 1) A grandmother is in the backseat of a car leaving and her grandchildren are running alongside the car waving bye and blowing her kisses; 2) A boyfriend is leaving on a bus and his girlfriend taps the bus window and says, “I’ll miss you” ; 3) A mother and baby are flying on a plane and the flight attendant gives her a loving smile; and 4) an older couple return home and are greeted by their loving dogs.

Connecting, reaching out to others, being helpful, being thankful, showing our care for others through our loving words and actions; this is how we become good stewards. We also want to be good evangelists. Remember to show our love and care by warmly welcoming visitors to church. Tell them about our QR code on the back of our bulletins. Offer to help them in any way needed. Invite them to come again. Tell them about the 9 a.m. Bible study Pastor leads before the 10:15 church service.

*“Dear friends, let us love one another, because love comes from God. Whoever loves is a child of God and knows God.” - 1 John 4:7*

Sincerely,

Lynn M. Phifer  
Council Member at Large







## 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



9/6: Meg Callahan  
 9/7: Ashley Mercer  
 9/7: Daralyn Sims  
 9/8: Priscilla Rivers-Williams  
 9/10: Nelson Sharit  
 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 2025

### September 7

Pastor: Tommy Presley  
 Worship Asst: Mike Halbrooks  
 Communion Asst: Henry Mosley  
 Reader: James McGraw  
 Greeter: Carol Lackey  
 Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris & James McGraw  
 Music: Becky Schultz

### September 21

Pastor: Tommy Presley  
 Worship Asst: Anthony McGraw  
 Communion Asst: Stan Weir  
 Reader: Carol Lackey  
 Greeters: Fran Foy & Beverly Halbrooks  
 Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris & James McGraw  
 Music: Larry Donaldson

### September 14

Pastor: Tommy Presley  
 Worship Asst: Glen Thompson  
 Communion Asst.: Robert Regulus  
 Reader: Sheree McGraw  
 Greeters: Eva Hill & Priscilla Williams  
 Live Stream Asst: Shane Harris & James McGraw  
 Music: Larry Donaldson

### September 28

Pastor: Tommy Presley  
 Worship Asst: Henry Mosley  
 Communion Asst: Mike Halbrooks  
 Reader: Frances Foy  
 Greeters: Kevin Kirwan & Carol Melton  
 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!

