

# FIRST Impressions

## What's INSIDE

A Publication of First Lutheran Church · Birmingham, AL

- 1 Pastor's Pen
- 1 Church Calendar Link
- 1 Local Events
- 3 LWML News
- 4 Joy of the Lord
- 4 Bible Study Opportunities
- 4 Man Up! August Information
- 5 Catechesis Survey
- 5 Evening Prayer
- 6 Stewardship
- 7 Ft. Wayne Traveling Youth
- 7 Christmas in July Recap



**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 Nothing New Under the Sun

*"What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. Is there a thing of which it is said, 'See, this is new'? It has been already in the ages before us. There is no remembrance of former things, nor will there be any remembrance of later things yet to be among those who come after." Ecclesiastes 1:9-11*

We tend to think of history as linear. Which of course we do - how else would we measure time and sequence? Seems pretty obvious to the average person.

However, I fear this causes us to also to think of

*Continued on page 2*

## Local Events

**Through 8/3:** *Big River: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Virginia Samford Theatre; [www.virginiasamfordtheatre.org](http://www.virginiasamfordtheatre.org)

**Through 8/10:** *Waitress*, Red Mountain Theatre; [www.redmountaintheatre.org](http://www.redmountaintheatre.org)

**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)

**8/2:** Rod Stewart in Concert, Coca-Cola Amphitheater; [www.livenation.com](http://www.livenation.com)

**8/18-24:** 27th Annual Sidewalk Film Festival, Downtown Theatre District; [www.sidewalkfest.com](http://www.sidewalkfest.com)



(Cont'd from p. 1)

history as always progressing. To put it another way, I fear we think that as time progresses, things get better. More importantly, we get better. Ecclesiastes seems to challenge us on this thought. While we sometimes have this obsession with the “new” or in our modern language “innovative,” the preacher in Ecclesiastes has no room for it. Nothing new under the sun he says to us. Seems bleak if I am being honest. So a question comes to mind. Why do you preach such things?

It would seem to me that each generation “discovers” something very old and presents it as a sort of “new” idea. Ecclesiastes is right. There is no remembrance of former things. Even the things that are yet to happen will be forgotten by the generation that comes after them. We are locked in this vicious cycle of forgetting and relearning and forgetting again. Unfortunately, that is the course of the human life. But there is one who does not forget. The preacher in Ecclesiastes does not preach for himself. He preaches for the Most High God. And God does not forget nor does anything surprise Him. There is nothing new under the sun for God. While this may be a bleak thought for us initially, I hope you can look at it a different way.

There is nothing new for God. Therefore, He knows how to help, comfort, and save you from trouble. There is nothing “new” that will keep you from Him or distract Him or surprise Him when it comes to you. He knows. He knows you and knows your struggles. Brother and sisters in Christ, all things have been taken to the cross and crucified with Jesus. There is no “innovative” sin that will keep you from God. Only the steadfast and eternal salvation won for us by our savior. Take heart brothers and sisters, there is nothing new under the sun. Praise be to God.

In Christ,

*Pastor Tommy*

## WHILE PASTOR IS AWAY

Pastor Tommy will be on vacation July 28 - August 8.

If you have a pastoral need during this time, please  
contact a deacon.



## LWML News

Greetings, Sisters and Brothers in Christ.



We the Women in Mission at First had a busy and productive July. We received a brief report from our sister Frances Robinson regarding the LWML convention. She reports that over 3,000 women attended. Several mission projects were approved for future support. The Sisters enjoyed a time of prayer, worship, and fellowship. More details will follow soon.

We received an update from one of our designated mission recipients. Amanda Epperson spent part of her summer on a youth mission trip to the mountains of Tennessee. This work was prior to her traveling to Zambia, Africa, which is scheduled for September 1, 2025. If interested, more information is available here:

**ONE COLLECTIVE**  
**C/O AMANDA EPPERSON**  
**2155 POINT BLVD, STE 200**  
**ELGIN, IL 60123**

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

We have started our planning for fundraising projects. One of these will be a dessert auction in time for Thanksgiving. No, it isn't too soon to plan for the holidays as we are midway through the year. Details on this and other projects will follow in the near future.

We were all very happy to see that our sisters that underwent surgery recently are healing well and have returned to worship. Of course, we continue to pray for their return to wholeness.

As always, we seek your prayers and support as we continue our mission work.

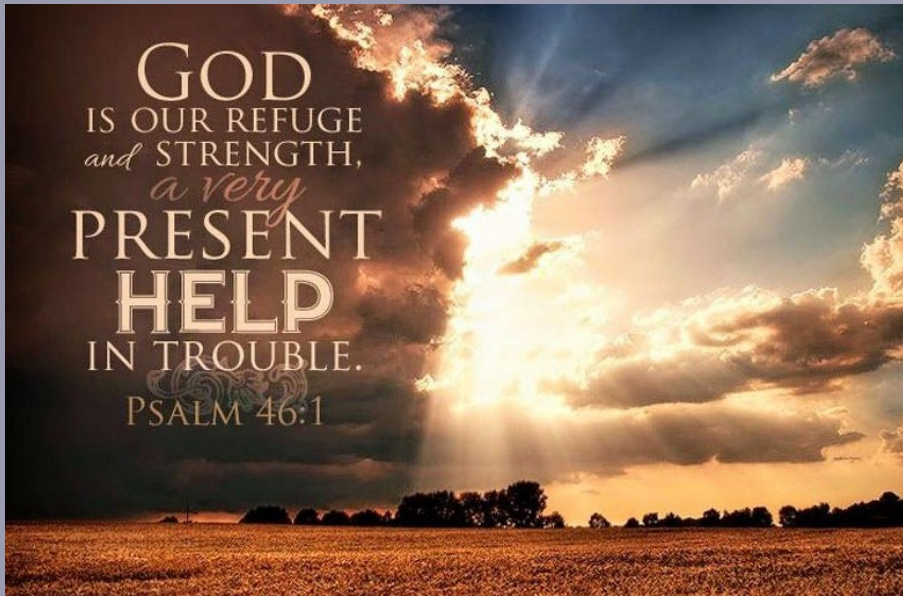
Frances Burks Foy  
President, First Lutheran LWML

*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.

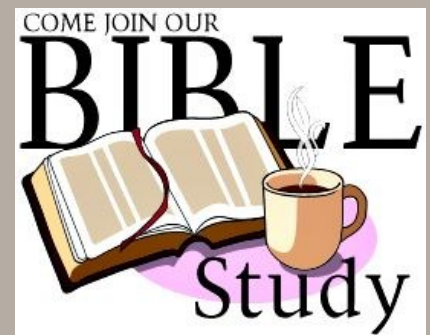




*Joy of  
the Lord*

## 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. - **ON HIATUS UNTIL FALL - STAY TUNED FOR UPDATES**
- 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 August Man Up! gathering will take place **the last Saturday in August (August 30) 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 August 24 so we'll know how many to plan on for breakfast. Contact Glen Thompson with any questions.



## Survey - Catechesis Class

Pastor Tommy is starting a class on Luther's Catechesis this fall. All are welcomed to attend, whether you want a refresher on Luther's Catechism or are a non-Lutheran member interested in membership at First Lutheran Church. The start date is scheduled for the week of September 7th and the class will take place in the evening. Please respond to this survey by Sunday, August 10<sup>th</sup> if:

☐ YES, I am interested in attending this class

I prefer:

☐ Tuesday evening at 5:30 pm

OR

☐ Wednesday evening at 5:30 pm

Email your response to [secretary@firstlutheranbham.org](mailto:secretary@firstlutheranbham.org), leave a message at 205-933-0380, or clip this article from the newsletter and place in the church secretary's mail slot outside the church office.

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

*Evening Prayer*

✠ ENTER IN SILENCE ✠

✠ WORSHIP PRAYERFULLY ✠

✠ DEPART IN PEACE ✠



## Stewardship

When you are in a waiting room and strike up a conversation with someone who is also waiting, it isn't typically about "stewardship"?

Well, this is what happened to me. Dan was in for a VA appointment, and I was waiting for him. While in the waiting room, I started talking with a man who was also waiting for a family member. Now, I am a people person and can easily talk to anyone, so this was not unusual. But what was odd, is that the conversation somehow involved stewardship! We talked about our gifts of time, talents and treasures. I was impressed that this gentleman knew so much about stewardship.

Being curious, I asked him what church he belonged to. He answered me that he was an Anglican. We talked about God's gifts to us, our faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior, and being good stewards. I was amazed how easily we conversed and shared stories. It reassured me that it is okay to talk about church, gifts, faith, and Jesus to a stranger. Now this man belonged to a church, but if he had not, I would have had an opportunity to invite him to church. We never know when such an opportunity will occur, so we need to be ready to share our faith at any time.

We know that our stewardship gifts of time, talents and treasures are present in many ways and on many occasions. Let's pray that we take full advantage of these opportunities to share God's wonderful news.

Let's also remember to be evangelists by welcoming visitors who are worshipping in our church on Sunday morning. Invite them to use the QR code on the back of our bulletins so we may reach out to them. They may be seeking a church in which to become members. Welcoming them shows warmth and friendliness. It also supports our Pastor, who welcomes visitors every week. We can also tell them about our 9 AM Bible Study led by Pastor Tommy, who is an excellent teacher. This may be just what they are looking for in a new church family.

A church family is a caring, loving, supportive group of people who truly care about each other and show it in many ways on Sunday morning and during the week. It is encouraging to hear from another member during the week or on a special occasion. Members reach out to each other when one is ill or having surgery. Our church family is very special. We give God thanks for our church family, our Pastor, and our stewardship gifts of time, talents and treasures.

*"Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions." 1 John 3:18.*

Sincerely,

Lynn M. Phifer  
Council Member at Large



## Endurance - LCMS Youth Gathering

First Lutheran extended a warm southern hospitality to the youth group from St. Peter's Lutheran Church and School, Ft. Wayne, Indiana, as they traveled to and from New Orleans for "Endurance," the biannual LCMS Youth Gathering.

Associate Pastor Adam McDowell and five chaperones, along with 28 teens, stopped over in Birmingham for a spend-the-night visit. This was certainly a test of "Endurance" as everyone camped indoors with sleeping bags.

A special shout-out to our members who served the travelers dinner and breakfast as they journeyed to this awesome youth gathering! Wendy and Shane Harris, Stan Weir, Ren Robinson, Mike Halbrooks, Glen Thompson and Pastor Tommy all served with gladness and endurance.



## Christmas in July

Oh what fun it was to think of snow, watch Christmas movies, and enjoy delicious Christmas treats while decorating Chrismon ornaments! Special thanks to Wendy and Shane Harris for organizing this inaugural event.

Here are two super simple and very tasty recipes for holiday snacks if visions of sugar plums are already dancing in your head.

This is so very easy and would be fun to make with young children: Layer cream cheese frosting on a vanilla wafer and top with a fresh strawberry.

Or try this yummy Pumpkin Pie Dip:

Ingredients:

- 1 15 oz can of pumpkin pie mix
- 1 8 oz container of whipped cream
- 1 8 oz of cream cheese

- 1 cupful of powdered sugar
- 1 tablespoon of pumpkin pie spice

Instructions:

Allow the cream cheese to come to room temp. Once it is soft, put in a large bowl. Add in the powdered sugar and mix together. Add can of pumpkin pie mix, pumpkin pie spice and whipped cream. Blend until smooth. Serve with biscotti, graham crackers, apple slices or ginger snaps. Enjoy!

