

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 President's Message
- 4 Stewardship
- 5 LWML News
- 6 Bible Study Opportunities
- 6 January Man Up!
- 7 Joy of the Lord
- 7 Evening Prayer
- 8 Birthdays & Anniversaries
- 8 January Worship Team



First Lutheran Church
2507 Highland Avenue
Birmingham, AL 35205
205.933.0380

www.firstlutheranbham.org

[View our Church Calendar](#)



Pastor's Pen A Year of Old Wisdom

In this age, there seems to be an obsession with “new” things. The latest and greatest trends marketed to us as better than the things that came before it. Our reach is ever extending toward the world of tomorrow where everything is wonderful and all our problems have been sorted out. Just maybe, this “new” idea, possession, trend will be the catalyst to that tomorrow if we just grasp it. However, as you well know, these things come and go. New turns to old very quickly. Thrill turns to mundane. So, the hunt begins again all for the “new.”

Continued on page 2

Local Events

Through 1/4: Glow Wild, Birmingham Zoo;
www.birminghamzoo.com

Through 3/24: Birmingham Squadron Basketball, Legacy Arena at BJCC; www.birmingham.bleague.nba.com

1/7-8: Blue Man Group, BJCC Concert Hall; www.bluman.com

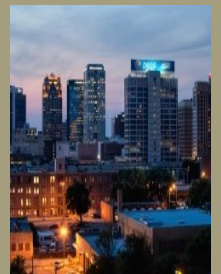
1/9: Rumours ATL: A Fleetwood Mac Tribute, Iron City; www.ironcitybham.com

1/16-17: ASO performs *South Pacific*; Alys Stephens Center; www.alabamasymphony.org

1/30-31: ASO performs *Luminous Legends: Tchaikovsky & Brahms*, Alys Stephens Center; www.alabamasymphony.org

1/31: Saturday Market at Pepper Place returns for 2026, Pepper Place and surrounding area; www.pepperplace.com/market

1/31 - 2/8: Alabama Ballet performs *At Home: Mixtape*, Alabama Ballet Center for Dance; www.alabamaballet.org



(cont'd from p. 1)

Brothers and sisters, I humbly challenge you to not do something new, but something very old. Below you will find a reading guide for the year for the book of Psalms. I know, I know. Pastors always seem to be saying something to the effect of read your Bibles, but I also recognize that often that phrase doesn't come with instructions, just exhortations. I hope to change that. The Psalms are rich with wisdom, comfort, teaching, and guidance from our Lord that can greatly benefit you. It is my hope this guide helps you meditate upon those gifts, seize them and make them yours.

Your Brother in Christ,

Pastor Tommy

A Year of Meditation on the Psalms

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
LENT Morning Evening	84 42; 32	119:73-80 121; 6	34 25; 91	5 27; 51	38 126; 102	22 107; 130	43 31; 143
EASTER Morning Evening	93 136; 117	97 124; 115	98 66; 116	99 8; 118	47 68; 113	96 50; 138	92 23; 114
GENERAL Week 1 Morning Evening	103 117; 139	5 84; 29	42 102; 133	89:1-18 1; 33	97 16; 62	51 142; 65	104 118; 111
Week 2 Morning Evening	19 81; 113	136 97; 112	123 30; 86	15 48; 4	36 80; 27	130 32; 139	56 100; 62
Week 3 Morning Evening	67 46; 93	51 85; 47	54 29; 99	65 125; 91	143 81; 116	86 6; 19	122 141; 90
Week 4 Morning Evening	110 66; 23	62 73; 8	13 36; 5	96 132; 134	116 26; 130	85 25; 40	61 138; 98 (NOTE: Begin again at Week1.)
ADVENT Morning Evening	24 25; 110	122 40; 67	33 85; 91	50 14; 16	18:1-20 126; 62	102 130; 16	90 80; 72
CHRISTMAS	<i>December 24</i> <i>December 25</i> <i>December 26</i> <i>December 27</i> <i>December 28</i> <i>December 29</i> <i>December 30</i>	Morning 19 2 116 34 2 96 93	Evening 132; 114 98; 96 119:1-24, 27 19; 121 110; 111 132; 97 89:1-18, 19-52	<i>December 31</i> <i>January 1</i> <i>January 2</i> <i>January 3</i> <i>January 4</i> <i>January 5</i> <i>January 6</i>	Morning 98 97 48 111 103 99 72	Evening 45; 96 99; 8 45; 29 107; 15 93; 97 96; 110 100; 67	
EPIPHANY	See GENERAL above.						

From the President

Praise God from whom all blessings flow! The capital improvement campaign (to replace the heating and cooling systems servicing the offices and library, caulk the Christ window, and add a door to the utility shed) which the Voters Assembly approved in November has met and exceeded its goal of \$50,000. By December 21, approximately \$62,000 had been received. The Church Council will discuss how the excess funds should be used after all improvements have been completed. Thank you for your generosity after being moved by the Holy Spirit.

The Christmas season will conclude with Epiphany Sunday on January 4. All those who are physically able are asked to stay after the worship service to help take down the Christmas decorations and prepare them for storage. With enough help this should take about half an hour.

After the first of the year, we will get back into our normal routine until we enter the Lenten season. Women's Bible Study will start on Tuesday January 13 at 11:00 AM and meet on the second and fourth Tuesdays. Catechesis class will begin on Wednesday January 7 with a potluck supper at 5:15PM and class beginning at 6:00PM. Pastor Murdaugh's Zoom Bible studies on Wednesday evening at 6:30 PM and Saturday morning at 8:00 AM begin on Saturday January 3 and Wednesday January 7. Email Pastor Murdaugh at georgeearl@hotmail.com to get a link to the studies. ManUp will meet on January 31 at 8:30AM. We will meet for breakfast at the church followed by a Bible study and a service project. All men of the church are encouraged to attend even if you are not able to participate in the service project. Come and enjoy the fellowship and Bible study.

In God's service,

Glen Thompson
Congregational President

Stewardship

Bloom Where You're Planted

“Bloom Where You're Planted” is the title of a devotional from “Open Waters,” by Life Way in Nashville, TN. St. Paul was concerned that the believers were unable to find satisfaction in their circumstances. Some were former Jews who had been ritually circumcised and thought they were better than those not circumcised. Some were slaves who envied those who were free. * They all wanted something different for their lives than the situation they were in.* St. Paul encouraged them to live in ways which honored God and showed the confidence they had received through salvation, regardless of their present circumstances.

In other words, “Bloom Where You're Planted.” This does not mean that things cannot change. It does mean that we should thrive in Christ and honor God in whatever situation we find ourselves. When we accept our circumstances, we truly bloom. Now our lives honor God. We use our time, talents and money to honor God despite our circumstances. God is truly honored.

It is not easy to live our lives in this manner, but with the strength we receive from our Lord, we can do it. Doing it serves God and brings joy to others and to ourselves.

Let us pray that we live our lives honoring God in 2026.

Prayer: Dear Father, when we lose sight of Your blessings, remind us that we have everything we need because of You. AMEN.

“For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord’s freeman; likewise, also he who is called, being free, is Christ’s servant.” 1 Corinthians 7:22.

God’s blessings in 2026,

Lynn M. Phifer
Council Member at Large

bloom
WHERE
YOU ARE
planted

LWML News

Ephesians 2:10



Greetings Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we begin this New Year of 2026, we'd like to reflect on the past year. We set grand goals for mission projects, choosing four instead of the usual three. I am pleased to announce that with God's help, we not only met our goals but surpassed them. Details on these projects were mentioned in a previous article.

We had the opportunity to have a group outing at The Club to share in the celebration of **GRACE HOUSE** through the auspices of Thrivent Financial.

During the summer we had a luncheon to assist in the financial backing of a wonderful young woman, Amanda Epperson. Amanda is currently preparing for her mission assignment to South Africa where she will work with young women and girls.

A financial donation was given to a project sponsored by Pastor Murdaugh in India to assist in the purchase of items needed for mission work.

Funds were mailed to **WORSHIP ANEW** for their broadcast ministry and work with the elderly.

Finally, a donation is planned for **RONALD McDONALD HOUSE**.

In November, we had a very successful Bake sale/auction, with all items being sold. There was some mildly aggressive bidding resulting in fun for everyone in attendance.

For our final initiative, we launched the Mite Box challenge between the men and women in the congregation. We'll announce the winners of this challenge soon, as it ends in January.

At our annual Christmas celebration, we had a bit of fun and enjoyed a delicious meal. At that time, we revealed our secret prayer sisters with a gift exchange.

We will make our final mission project selections for this year and will share these when completed.

We the Women in Mission here at First could not have done any of this without you. We thank you but, above all we give thanks to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As always, we seek your continued prayers and support.

Blessings and Peace,

Frances Burks Foy

President, First Lutheran Women in Mission

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 - Adult Catechesis and Potluck Dinner (in person at First Lutheran) - Dinner at 5:30 p.m.; Class at 6:00 p.m.
- 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.

Man Up! Men's Ministry

Man Up! is back in action for 2026 and all men are invited and encouraged to attend. Join us on **the LAST Saturday of January (January 31) at 8:30 a.m.** 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 January 25 so we'll know how many to plan on for breakfast. Contact Glen Thompson with any questions.



WORSHIP

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

Joy of the Lord



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

Evening Prayer

✝ ENTER IN SILENCE ✝

✝ WORSHIP PRAYERFULLY ✝

✝ DEPART IN PEACE ✝





FIRST LUTHERAN STAFF

PASTOR

Rev. Tommy Presley

OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

Rev. Kurtis Schultz

MINISTRY COORDINATORS:

CHRIST CARE

Rev. Tommy Presley

SERVE & CELEBRATE

Lorenza Robinson

FACILITIES & PROPERTIES

Stan Weir

WORSHIP/DEACONS

Charles Craig

DIGITAL MEDIA

June Weir

FIRST IMPRESSIONS EDITOR

Heather Lackey

Birthdays & Anniversaries



1/5: Terry Lepp
1/5: Elaine Tabb
1/7: Jeremy Regulus
1/12: Frances Foy
1/14: Tommy Lampella
1/16: Shea Parisi
1/16: Kristal Walton
1/22: Stan Weir
1/27: Charles Craig
1/27: LaShanda Crenshaw

**No January Anniversaries
on Record**

Worship Team...January 2026

January 4

Pastor: Tommy Presley
Worship Asst: Robert Regulus
Communion Asst: Glen Thompson
Reader: Frances Foy
Greeters: Carol Lackey & Teresa Murdaugh
Live Stream: Shane Harris & James McGraw
Music: Larry Donaldson

January 11

Pastor: Tommy Presley
Worship Asst: Anthony McGraw
Communion Asst: Stan Weir
Reader: OPEN
Greeters: Eva Hill & Priscilla Williams
Live Stream: Shane Harris & James McGraw
Music: Larry Donaldson

January 18

Pastor: Tommy Presley
Worship Asst: Henry Mosley
Communion Asst: Mike Halbrooks
Reader: Glen or Pat Thompson
Greeters: Fran Foy & Beverly Halbrooks
Live Stream: Shane Harris & James McGraw
Music: Larry Donaldson

January 25

Pastor: Tommy Presley
Worship Asst: Glen Thompson
Communion Asst: Robert Regulus
Reader: Henry Mosley
Greeters: Carol Lackey
Live Stream: 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!

