

# FIRST Impressions

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## 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.”

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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](#)



## Local Events

**Through 1/4:** Glow Wild, Birmingham Zoo;  
[www.birminghamzoo.com](http://www.birminghamzoo.com)



**Through 3/24:** Birmingham Squadron Basketball, Legacy Arena at BJCC; [www.birmingham.gleague.nba.com](http://www.birmingham.gleague.nba.com)

**1/7-8:** Blue Man Group, BJCC Concert Hall; [www.blueman.com](http://www.blueman.com)

**1/9:** Rumours ATL: A Fleetwood Mac Tribute, Iron City; [www.ironcitybham.com](http://www.ironcitybham.com)

**1/16-17:** ASO performs *South Pacific*; Alys Stephens Center; [www.alabamasymphony.org](http://www.alabamasymphony.org)

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

**1/31:** Saturday Market at Pepper Place returns for 2026, Pepper Place and surrounding area; [www.pepperplace.com/market](http://www.pepperplace.com/market)

**1/31 - 2/8:** Alabama Ballet performs *At Home: Mixtape*, Alabama Ballet Center for Dance; [www.alabamaballet.org](http://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
<b>LENT</b> <b>Morning</b> <b>Evening</b>	84 42; 32	119:73- 80 121; 6	34 25; 91	5 27; 51	38 126; 102	22 107; 130	43 31; 143
<b>EASTER</b> <b>Morning</b> <b>Evening</b>	93 136; 117	97 124; 115	98 66; 116	99 8; 118	47 68; 113	96 50; 138	92 23; 114
<b>GENERAL</b> <b>Week 1</b> <b>Morning</b> <b>Evening</b>	103 117; 139	5 84; 29	42 102; 133	89:1-18 1; 33	97 16; 62	51 142; 65	104 118; 111
<b>Week 2</b> <b>Morning</b> <b>Evening</b>	19 81; 113	136 97; 112	123 30; 86	15 48; 4	36 80; 27	130 32; 139	56 100; 62
<b>Week 3</b> <b>Morning</b> <b>Evening</b>	67 46; 93	51 85; 47	54 29; 99	65 125; 91	143 81; 116	86 6; 19	122 141; 90
<b>Week 4</b> <b>Morning</b> <b>Evening</b>	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 Week 1.)
<b>ADVENT</b> <b>Morning</b> <b>Evening</b>	24 25; 110	122 40; 67	33 85; 91	50 14; 16	18:1-20 126; 62	102 130; 16	90 80; 72
<b>CHRISTMAS</b>	December 24 December 25 December 26 December 27 December 28 December 29 December 30	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	December 31 January 1 January 2 January 3 January 4 January 5 January 6	Morning 98 97 48 111 103 99 72	Evening 45; 96 99; 8 45; 29 107; 15 93; 97 96; 110 100; 67	
<b>EPIPHANY</b>			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](mailto: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



## 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

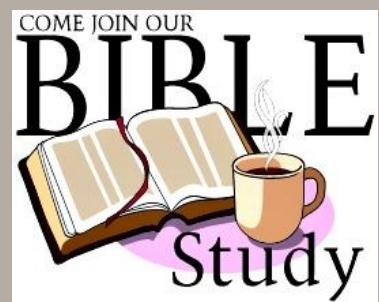
President, First Lutheran Women in Mission



## 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](mailto: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.



A graphic with a dark background and a circular pattern of blurred, colorful lights in shades of red, orange, yellow, and green. Overlaid on the graphic is the word "WORSHIP" in large, white, sans-serif capital letters.

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 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 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 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!

