



First Impressions

Worship God, strengthen His people, and reach out
with the Love of Christ

Volume 17 Issue 2

February 2010

The Food of Heaven*

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me." In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sin. This do as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." – Matthew 26:26-28, Mark 14:22-24, Luke 22:19-20, 1 Corinthians 11:23-25

The journey of life we travel often times seems difficult and when we attach ourselves to the security that the world seems to offer, we only find ourselves bruised and disappointed. We find that sin is not a stranger in our lives. At the very least, we have complained and grumbled. We have hoarded when we should have shared; we have turned away when we should have helped. Because of sin, we have snapped at the ones we love and argued with the ones we cherish. We have felt ashamed, guilty and bitter. Sin has produced more heartaches than we can count and broken more promises than stars in the heavens. Sin is the seed of mistrust, bigotry, adultery and out and out robbery and murder. And here we are, making daily contributions to the ego of Satan. When we really look at ourselves in the mirror we no longer see "Mr. or Ms. Great and Wonderful", - do we. We are just beat-up sinners in a sinful world. So, how are we sinners strengthened, lifted up, renewed, and assured through the difficulties we endure because of our own sins and the sins of the world? Our good and gracious God provides a holy and precious meal that gives us the nourishment of forgiveness – the Lord's Supper! We thank and praise God now and forever for this wonderful food of heaven, the Sacrament of the Altar.

Do we need this Supper? You better believe it! When we examine ourselves in the bright light of God's holiness, we realize what sin has done to us and just how much we are in need of His forgiveness. Our sinfulness, troubles, sorrows, difficulties, and stresses encountered in this fallen world, are all reasons we need this Holy meal. As great as our needs are, so much greater is this gift of life.

Our Lord Jesus instituted this sacrament with the words above. Take a hard look at and note the words "given for you", "shed for you", and "for the forgiveness of sins". Brush off the old Small Catechism and review once again those scripturally sound words of reassurance: "*It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ himself to eat and drink.*"

So what is Jesus giving us in the Lord's Supper? He is, indeed, continually distributing to us the body and blood of the sacrifice He made for us – the sacrifice of paying for the sins of the whole world. That's you and me, brothers and sisters in Christ! By receiving His body and blood, we are receiving forgiveness, life, and salvation. And what comes from this mercy of God? Love, peace, hope, and a burning desire to do God's will – serving and living in love and harmony with others.

"Draw near and take the body of the Lord, and drink the holy blood for you out-poured; offered was He for greatest and for least, Himself the victim and Himself the priest." – LSB 637.

God's Peace always,
Pastor Tom

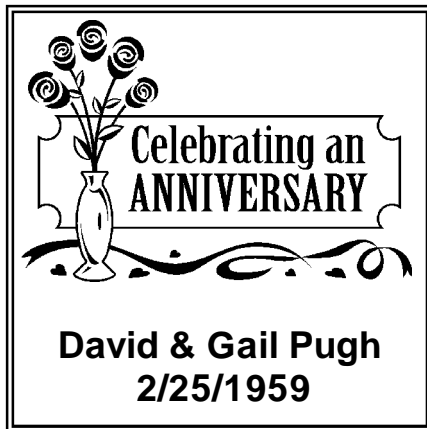
* Sections of this article were paraphrased from Dr. A.L. Berry's paper entitled, "The Sacrament of the Altar."
www.lcms.org

Ashley Stiefel- 4th
Jana Rotton- 7th
Laura Whittington - 11th
Annie Harrell- 14th



Birthday Wishes

James Venable -
18th
Myra Grund - 19th
Pat Thompson -24th



**FUND RAISER
Spaghetti Dinner**

The Youth will be having a spaghetti dinner on February 28, 2010 following the 10:15 worship service in the fellowship hall. Suggested \$5.00 donation or "free will" offering is appreciated. Stay tuned to your bulletins for more details. Hope to see you there!



Mid-week Lenten Services begin on Wednesday, February 17 with Ash Wednesday and continues for the next five weeks. Each week, one or more of the Boards will be hosting a "soup supper" before the evening worship service. If you would like to help, please contact a member of the Church Council.

"Soup Supper" - 5:30 PM - 6:20 PM

Lutheran Ministries of Alabama:

In cooperation with Lutheran Disaster Relief, the LCMS, and the ELCA, the Lutheran Ministries of Alabama (LMA) is inviting each Birmingham Lutheran congregation to identify a Volunteer Disaster Response Coordinator. The Coordinator should be physically fit and be able to spend a few days as the first LMA responder at a disaster event in the Birmingham area. Training will be provided. If there is a member interested in applying for this volunteer position, please contact the Church office to request an application. The first training session is scheduled for the end of January. If more information is needed, please contact Mr. Eldon Zimmerman at 205-879-2740, or Mr. Mel Brackman at 256-339-8555.



Thanks,
Toby

WORSHIP WORKERS



FIRST & EMMANUEL LUTHERAN

Children's Church –

- February 7 - Julie Cvengros
- February 14 - Kate Cahill
- February 21 - Carol Lackey
- February 28 - Myra Grund

Readers:

- February 7 - Carol Lackey
- February 14 - Mike Grund
- February 21 - Glen Thompson
- February 28 - Kate Cahill

Altar Guild: Sandra Heidecker

Candles: June Weir

Communion Assistant: Wilson Whittington

Ushers: Ray Hunter, Toby Cahill, Charlie Hayes, Jacob Mayhew

Worship Assistant: Mike Twiss

Nursery: Meg Callahan

Harvest - Graham and Victoria Sisson go through the Bible one chapter at a time.

Small Group - Topical Bible study for a limited number of participants taught by Rachel Mudd.

Adult Bible Study - General Bible study taught by Mike Grund.

Children's & Youth Sunday School Classes:

Pre-School - for kids 2-5 years old who cannot read.

Early Elementary - for kids in 1st - 3rd grade with limited reading skills.

Upper Elementary - for kids in 4th - 5th grade.

Middle School - for youth in 6th - 8th grade.



Prayer Requests

Retirement Home: Dorothy Adair, Annie Harrell, Leona Boehme

Recovering: Delores Goehler, Flo Fischer, Hildegard Wesson, David Cybul & Bernie Cybul (Krista Wanats' brother & Father), and Floyd Seibert (Charlene Seibert's brother).

Mourning: Leo Perry, Anna Schmidt (mother of Becky Schultz), and Major Jeff Graham, USAF (friend of Joel Lackey).

Illness: Corrine Donahoo, Judy Drew's brother-in-law, Steve Norby (brain tumor).

Missionaries: Meg Tumbleson (China), Bible Faith Lutheran Seminary (India).

Members who have lost their jobs.

Those Serving in the Military: Former member, Walt Mattil in Afghanistan.



Altar Flowers

The sign up sheet and donation envelopes for 2010 are posted on the wall between the Pastor's and secretary's offices.

Altar Flower

Board of Deacons



From the Deacons...

"The holy Evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke and St. Paul write: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me." In the same way also he took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

This familiar passage from Luther's Small Catechism, which we hear repeated every Communion Sunday, exhorts us to "do in remembrance of Me, ... as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me". The question before us today is how should we define the word "often"?

Traditionally at First and Emmanuel, we have celebrated the Lord's Supper every other Sunday. When we held two services per Sunday, we had Communion every Sunday, but alternated between services. The Deacons Board, along with Pastor Tom, are considering offering Communion every Sunday, a practice that many of our sister congregations have gone to already. A previous call for input on this question resulted in a limited number of responses, which ran roughly 50% for and against. What we are proposing to do, starting in April, after Easter, is to begin a Sunday school class to study the Sacrament of the Altar, and to help us to arrive at an informed decision on this topic. It is then our intent to begin offering Communion every Sunday in May.

The Deacons welcome any feedback our members would like to offer on this topic, and we invite you to contact any of the Deacons (Wilson Whittington, Jim Campbell, Mike Twiss, Charlie Hayes, Brett Stiefel, Graham Sisson, and Toby Cahill), or Pastor Tom.



Leona Boehme
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Apt. 269
Birmingham, AL 35244
205-988-0402



The Board of Deacons is still looking for worship volunteers to be readers, ushers, and/or greeters. Are you willing to serve? Contact Toby Cahill if the answer is YES!

Also, the other Boards are always looking for a few good Christians to carry on the Great Commission. Contact any Chairperson if you are willing to assist (the list can be found on the bulletin board down the hall from the church secretary's office).

People will appreciate your service, but more importantly, so will God!



First/Emmanuel Lutheran Church

8:00 AM Choir Practice
9:00 a.m. Sunday School for Children & Adults
10:15 a.m. Sunday Worship Service
Communion Service 1st and 3rd and 5th Sunday

First/Emmanuel Lutheran Church

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Birmingham, AL 35205-2497

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Bulletin E-mail: secretary@firstlutheranbham.org
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IN THIS ISSUE

Church Calendar.....Page 4
Prayer Requests.....Page 3
Worship Workers.....Page 3

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