



First Impressions

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

Volume 18 Issue 7

July 2011

“What Comes First?”

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” - Genesis 1:1

So what came first ... the chicken or the egg? Most of us have heard a similar question referencing the *order* of things at some point in our lives. We might as well go ahead and get right down to it and ask, “Ok then ... so where did this “*order*” of things come from?”

When we read the magnificent account of creation, we see that our Creator also **created** a natural **order** of things within that very act of creation. When we look back at our every day life experiences we have to admit that God’s creation of *order... good order* is a pretty magnificent thing in and of itself. We find that things run smoother and more efficient when done in an orderly manner. Life is more enjoyable, we begin to enjoy what God has given to us even more when we look at *good order* as yet another one of his grand gifts. This *good order*, like all good things from God, has been placed before us by him for a very valid reason: so that we may readily receive all the good gifts He has in store for us. But sometimes we unknowingly mess up His *good order* with our “not so” good order of things – no pun intended here. We get ourselves in the way and guess what? The cart is all of a sudden in front of the horse. “Uh-gin”, as Forest Gump would say.

When we go to worship, God is there and worship is indeed a wonderful gift he has given us. Our Creator – Father, Son and Holy Spirit comes to us and says, “*Here ‘I am’... with you. Here I reveal and give myself to you in Word and Sacrament.*” Our Divine Services are all done in an ordered manner too, and this my friends does not limit the power of the Holy Spirit in any way except when we let ourselves and the world get in the way. Worship life is the pinnacle of God’s presence with us. He gives of Himself to us in a fullness that goes beyond anything we can imagine. He desires us to know the fullness of that experience. He even gives us the means through which we are to prepare ourselves as He comes to us in this pinnacle called worship.

What does that means and how can we prepare ourselves for a more meaningful and exciting worship experience? Let’s take a quick look back at this practice called “*good order*”, or simply “*what comes first.*” If we are to exercise and use this gift, we need to be about good order and do what comes first to fully experience what comes next. That means we are to fully prepare ourselves for worship and that means we are to do a little more than shower and put on our Sunday best. When we read and study God’s Word daily, we learn more of Him and we learn who He is and what he desires for us. His grace, his great love and mercy have always been there for us, but now they are so vivid and so bright. We begin to see we are never alone. Serious, committed Bible study opens up a whole new relationship with our Lord, a relationship that we may never have expected – much less experienced. Never underestimate the power and workings of the Holy Spirit, friends. When we gather together on Sunday, we do so in unison, receiving His good and gracious gifts. As our Jesus comes to us, He gives us an abundant opportunity to experience Him fully. Why wouldn’t we want to do that? Why wouldn’t we want to feel a passion to share the joy of knowing Him with others?

So, my friends, has your worship experience been somewhat glum, ho-hum and down right dull sometimes? Do you think that something has to be done by the church to excite you and make your worship experience more fulfilling? Perhaps you just want some entertainment or a quick, fast, fading, emotional experience. I certainly hope not.

Re-evaluate your thoughts and reasons for that possible attitude and let me ask you these questions: Have you truly sat down and prepared yourself for worship? Are you putting things in good order during the week? Have you prepped yourself with a committed Bible Study prior to Worship? And ...*are you holding yourself accountable to do so?* So much is waiting for you – joy, peace, and a hunger for more of God’s goodness. Do you want a passion to tell others about your Jesus – a passion that is not obstructed by the world? “**Bible Study**” is at the top of our sign – **big and bold**. The invitation to the pinnacle, to Worship. The opportunity is there. So, *what comes first?*

- Pastor Tom

Rhoda Rivers - 7/4
Josephine Stallworth - 7/5
Kelly Shiflett—7/16



Dorrie Mayhew—7/19
Justin Rudd—7/19
Dee Mayhew—7/27



Jay & Sandra Heidecker – 7/3/99
Wilson & Lisa Whittington – 7/7/01
Nelson & Marcy Sharit— 7/17/93
Brian & Emily Hayes - 7/19/08
Toby & Kate Cahill – 7/24/76



From the Editor

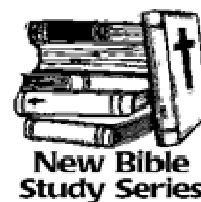
Beginning in July, we will no longer be sending the newsletter via e-mail. In lieu of a survey to see who is actually reading the newsletter, we will be hiding a ?trivia question? within an article, announcement, or some other clever place. You may answer the question by sending it to the secretary's e-mail (see back page), on the website, or writing it on a piece of paper along with your name and placing it in the church secretary's mailbox across from the church office. The prize this month - Grace!

The newsletter is available online at our website: www.firstlutheranbham.org.

The answer will be published in the following month's newsletter. Have fun and read on!

Pastor Porter has begun two classes utilizing the best selling, most read book of all time – The Bible! The Book of Ephesians class meets on Sunday mornings at 9:00 AM and the Gospel of John meets on Wednesday evenings at 6:00 PM.

Plan your schedule now to attend Sunday morning, Wednesday evening, or both!



Office Hours - Pastor Porter

I have established office hours as follows: Monday and Tuesday - 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. and Wednesday - 1:00 p.m. through Wednesday night Bible Study. Of course, if I am needed at any times other than listed, please don't hesitate to contact me via my home or cell number. Within the next couple of months, I hope and encourage each and every one of you to call and drop by to chat in order that we may have the opportunity to get to know each other better and develop a personal relationship. Looking forward to working with all of you.



Our Saturday evening casual praise and worship service, Twilight Song, will be on vacation for the month of July. We look forward to its return the first Saturday in August with a songfest - an introduction to some of the music we will be singing the rest of the year. Plan on attending and stay tuned to your bulletin for more details!

WORSHIP WORKERS



FIRST/ EMMANUEL LUTHERAN

Children's Church –

- July 3 - Judy Drews
- July 10 - Kate Cahill
- July 17 - Carol Lackey
- July 24 - Pat Ryan
- July 31 - Kate Cahill

Readers:

- July 3 - Wilson Whittington
- July 10 - Toby Cahill
- July 17 - Carol Lackey
- July 24 - Glen Thompson
- July 31 - Graham Sisson

Altar Guild: Terry Lepp

Candles: June Weir

Communion Assistant: Graham Sisson

Ushers: Wilson Whittington, Charlie Hayes,
Toby Cahill

Worship Assistant: Jim Campbell

Nursery: Meg Callahan



The Altar Flower sign up sheet is located on the wall next to the church office. Donations are

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

Adult Bible Study - General Bible study taught by Pastor Tom.

Book of Ephesians - taught by Pastor Porter.

Beth Moore Series - "Esther: It's Tough Being a Woman" taught by Judy Drews and Donna Speegle.

Children's & Youth Sunday School Classes:

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



Prayers

Homebound/Assisted Care: Charlene Seibert, Corrine Donahoo, Lucille Cooper, Hildegard Wesson, Dean Mizzell, Edward Royal, Dolores Goehler, Leona Boehme, Edna Grund, Charlotte Newell, Becky Jenkins,

Evelyn Krueger, Norma Jefferson.

Recovering: Delores Goehler, Hildegard Wesson.

Illness: Dean Mizzell (chronic arthritis), Edward Royal (cataract surgery), Alice Callsen (Krista's godmother has tumor), Ethan Melton, Norma Jefferson, Corrine Donahoo, Judy Drew's brother-in-law, Steve Norby (brain tumor), and Arnold Hardin (stomach cancer).




Intercession: For the people of Japan, Libya, Haiti, and the tornado and flood victims.

Missionaries: Bible Faith Lutheran Seminary (India).

Members who have lost their jobs.

Those Serving in the Military: Mike Golchert, Joel Lackey (deployed).

JULY 2011

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	Confirmation Sunday 8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM Worship 11:30 AM Deacon Meeting 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	27	28 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Women's Bible Study 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Narcotics Anonymous	29 6:00 PM Gospel of John Bible Study	30 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	1 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	2 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Narcotics Anonymous 5:00 PM TWILIGHT SONG SERVICE - CANCELLED until August
3	8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM Worship 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	4	5 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Women's Bible Study 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Narcotics Anonymous	6 6:00 PM Gospel of John Bible Study	7 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	8 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM Men's Bible Study Group 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	9 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Narcotics Anonymous
10	8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM Worship 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	11 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM Church Council Meeting	12 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Women's Bible Study 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Narcotics Anonymous	13 6:00 PM Gospel of John Bible Study	14 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	15  TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALL GAME 6:00 PM Lakeran Night at The Barons 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	16 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Narcotics Anonymous
17	8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM Worship 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	18	19 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Women's Bible Study 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Narcotics Anonymous	20  YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO RECEIVE INFORMATION FROM EARLY! NEWSLETTER Newsletter Deadline 6:00 PM Gospel of John Bible Study	21 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	22 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM Men's Bible Study Group 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	23  SUMMER OF FUN 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Narcotics Anonymous 10:00 AM Family Fun Day
24	8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM Worship 11:30 AM Deacon Meeting 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	25	26 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Women's Bible Study 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Narcotics Anonymous	27 6:00 PM Gospel of John Bible Study	28 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	29 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	30 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Narcotics Anonymous
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WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBERS

We would like to welcome the following brothers and sisters in Christ into membership at First/Emmanuel Lutheran Church:

- ~ Mr. Major Bowens, Mrs. Margaret Bowens, and Marjorie Bowens
- ~ Cynthia Brown
- ~ Nancy Clasby
- ~ Mr. Charles W. Craig and Mrs. Ernestine Craig
- ~ LaShanda DeJoy Curry
- ~ Doris Daniels
- ~ Nicole Fortune
- ~ Curtis Harris, Jr.
- ~ Mr. Anthony McGraw, Mrs. Sheree McGraw, and (James A. McGraw)
- ~ Mr. Harold McNair and Mrs. Vivian McNair
- ~ Henry L. Mosley
- ~ Mr. Thomas M. Noon, Mrs. Heidi Noon, and (Gretchen Noon)
- ~ Rev. Dr. Arthur Porter and Mrs. Janice Porter
- ~ Mr. Robert L. Regulus Jr., Mrs. Gwendolyn Regulus, and (Jeremy Regulus)
- ~ Henrietta Rivers
- ~ Rhoda Rivers
- ~ Priscilla Rivers Williams
- ~ Derek Le Man Robinson
- ~ Mr. Everett L. Robinson and Mrs. Desland Robinson
- ~ Mr. Lorenza Robinson and Mrs. Frances Robinson
- ~ Dorothy Sims
- ~ L'Tanya Sims
- ~ Daralyn Sims
- ~ Mrs. Michelle Stallworth Smith, [Mr. David Smith], (Austin John Stallworth)
- ~ Josephine Stallworth
- ~ Rosie P. Walton
- ~ Kimberley Walton Washington, (Kristal Dominique Walton, Kelsey Danielle Washington, Ernest Washington III)
- ~ Zo Welch



?In what year did the LCMS radio program The Lutheran Hour make its debut?



Directory corrections:

Cynthia Brown
1700 1st Court West
Birmingham, AL 35208
yzwlqrq@hotmail.com

Larry Donaldson's e-mail should read: LarryWDonaldson@bellsouth.net
Daralyn & Dorothy Sims' zip code should read: 35228

Lee Greenwood is probably best known for his patriotic song *“I’m Proud to Be an American.”*

Among the lyrics of this song are these two verses:



*“And I’m proud to be an American where at least I know I’m free
And I won’t forget the men who died who gave that right to me.*

*And I gladly stand up next to you and defend her still today
‘Cause there ain’t no doubt I love this land God bless the USA.”*

Around July 4th this song will likely be heard many times because it gives credit and thanks to those soldiers who have given their all to preserve our freedom as citizens of the United States of America. “Freed to live” might well be the words that describe our lives as American citizens.

As Christians we are blessed even more than living in a free country. Because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross we have been redeemed to live as His free and joyous people. That freedom from sin, death and the devil is not something to be taken for granted. The cost for that freedom is way too high to become nonchalant or indifferent about it. As God’s redeemed stewards, in cooperation with and encouragement from fellow redeemed stewards, we freely and joyfully manage all of life and life’s resources for God’s purposes. Two verses from one of our popular hymns say it so well:

*“Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days; let them flow in ceaseless praise.*

*Take my love, my Lord, I pour at Thy feet its treasure store;
Take myself, and I will be ever, only, all, for Thee.”*

So, as we celebrate our nation’s freedom and independence we can do so with joy while always remembering that freedom is not free and brings with it responsibility to stand up as Americans and Christians to help move our country to higher moral ground. Let our prayer this July 4th and for all days be like the words of this great Christian hymn:

*“God bless our native land! Firm may she always stand through storm and night!
When the wild tempests rave, Ruler of wind and wave,
Do Thou our country save by Thy great might.*

*For her our prayer shall rise to God above the skies; on Him we wait.
Thou who art ever nigh, guiding with watchful eye,
To Thee aloud we cry, God save the State!”*

When we stand up for Jesus and for our country we remember that standing up lifts our whole being—mind, body, spirit, time, talents and, yes, also our pocketbooks—so that in all circumstances we can be *maturing stewards who do the right things for the right reasons and strive for excellence in all we do!*”

WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS



For anyone interested in serving as a Sunday morning worship reader, usher, or greeter - please add your name and contact information to the sign-up sheet located in the office hallway. If you have any questions about this opportunity, please contact either Wilson Whittington or Jim Campbell, whose numbers are in the directory. We appreciate those who have served thus far, and welcome any who wish to join our worship service helpers.

Lutheran Night at the Barons Hosted by Thrivent Financial

Birmingham Barons vs. Jacksonville Suns



Friday, July 15, 2011
Dinner begins at 6:00 p.m.
Game time is 7:05 p.m.
Fireworks following the game

Ticket price is \$11.00 per person

(includes dinner, drinks, general admission & fireworks)
First 1,500 children receive a Barons replica jersey! (Child must be present to receive the jersey.)



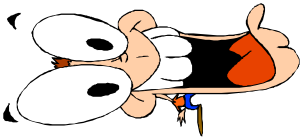
Hot dogs, chips, cookies, peanuts & drinks
provided in the Michael Jordan Banquet Room



Sign up sheets are the bulletin boards in the hallway. Please sign up by July 3rd so that tickets may be ordered.

See June Weir to purchase tickets.

Directions Regions Park: <http://www.hooveral.org/Default.asp?ID=435>



Mark Your Calendars!!

**Family Fun Day
Brown Family Lake house**

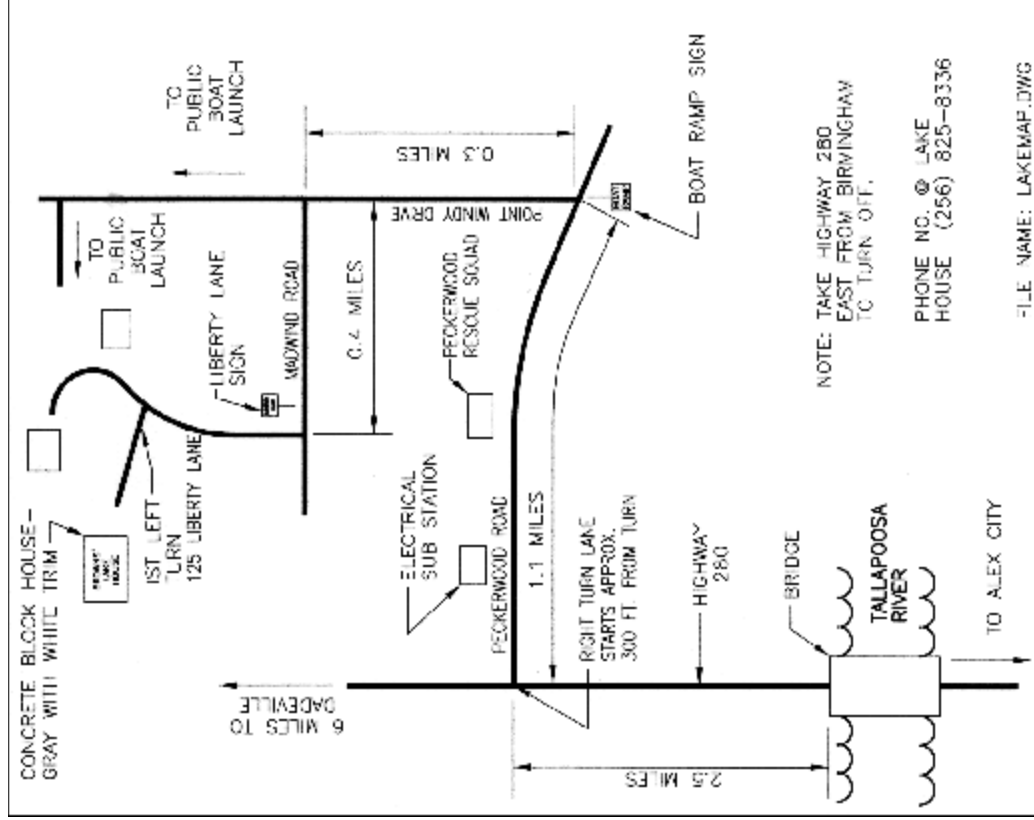
July 23, 2011, 10:00 a.m. 'til dusk

**Sandwiches, baked beans, and potato
salad for lunch**

Just bring a snack and drink to share

**Other items to consider bringing:
swimsuit, towel, bag chair, swim shoes,
sunscreen**

**Lake house phone: 256-825-8336
More info: 822-8078**





First/Emmanuel Lutheran Church

8:00 AM Choir Practice
9:00 a.m. Sunday School for Children & Adults
10:15 a.m. Sunday Worship and Communion Service

5:00 PM Saturday Evening - Twilight Song

First/Emmanuel Lutheran Church

2507 Highland Avenue South
Birmingham, AL 35205-2497

933-0380

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