



First Impressions

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

Volume 16 Issue 12

December 2009

The Child

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. – Isaiah 9:6

What can be more gratifying for a parent, or a grandparent for that matter, than to see their child/grandchild lying peacefully asleep in their crib? I truly believe that it ranks right at the very top as a humbling experience. Imagine, standing above looking down at this small new life fresh from the hand of God. I have heard of giant men, like the “Mean Joe Green” type of big guys, actually breaking down in tears of joy as they gaze upon the wondrous gift of newborn sons and daughters for the first time. For me, as a former vicar and now a pastor, that experience has manifested itself every time I look upon these gifts of God no matter whose son or daughter they may be.

Now, take a moment and reflect back upon a makeshift stable on a frosty night some 2000 years ago. Mother and father are close at hand, along with the companionship of sheep, cattle, goats, and all the scents of a stable. Shepherds, summoned by an angel declaring Good News, look on in amazement as they arrive. No one else is there except the very presence of God. The tears of peace flow down each cheek and humility works its course. Mary, though silent, has a heart full beyond comparison. She knows what has happened and so do the others, but she is the baby’s earthly mom. Her love does magnify the Lord!

This child, the ***Wonderful Counselor and Prince of Peace***, is the love of God for all human-kind. This is the Christ Child given for us – God in human flesh - the salvation of the whole world – the new, everlasting covenant that binds us to the Father forever. Yes, this same small child lying humbly in a rugged wooden manger would, in the future and in like humble fashion, lie on a rugged wooden cross for our salvation. He would rise again on the third day breaking the bonds of death and opening the door to everlasting life with Him for all human-kind. ***This is our Savior, the Prince of Peace! This is the love of God for us – Rejoice! Rejoice!***

Holy Father, all we can say is thank you, thank you, thank you – Amen.



Michael Neimkin - 2nd
Carol Lackey - 3rd
Brett Stiefel - 5th
Dorothy Adair - 12th
Toby Cahill - 14th
Edna Grund - 15th

Marcy Sharit - 17th
Sandra Heidecker - 24th
Charlene Siebert - 25th
Wray Allen - 25th
Arthur Perry - 30th
Matthew Cahill - 31st



Ray & Judy Hunter, 12/17/60
Bruce & Josephine Basden, 12/23/81



Worship for Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas is as follows:

Wednesday 11-25-09 6:30 PM = Thanksgiving Eve Service with Holy Communion

Wednesday 12-02-09 5:30 PM - 6:20 PM = Breaking Bread Fellowship
6:30 PM = Evening Prayer with Homily

Sunday 12-06-09 10:15 AM = Worship/Christmas Drama

Wednesday 12-09-09 5:30 PM - 6:20 PM = Breaking Bread Fellowship
6:30 PM = Evening Prayer with Homily

Wednesday 12-16-09 5:30 PM - 6:20 PM = Breaking Bread Fellowship
6:30 PM = Evening Prayer with Homily

Sunday 12-20-09 10:15 AM = Lessens & Carols

Thursday 12-24-09 7:00 PM = Christmas Eve Worship

Friday 12-25-09 10:00 AM = Christmas Day Worship with Holy Communion

WORSHIP WORKERS



FIRST / EMMANUEL LUTHERAN

Children's Church –

- December 6 - Volunteer Needed
- December 13 - Kate Cahill
- December 20 - Carol Lackey
- December 27 - Myra Grund

Readers:

- December 6 - Toby Cahill
- December 13 - Krista Wanat
- December 20 - Donna Speegle
- December 27 - Wilson Whittington

Altar Guild: Jeri & Becky Troullier

Candles: June Weir

Communion Assistant: Wilson Whittington

Ushers: Charlie Hayes, Jim Campbell, Mike Grund, Mike Twiss

Worship Assistant:s: Toby Cahill

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.

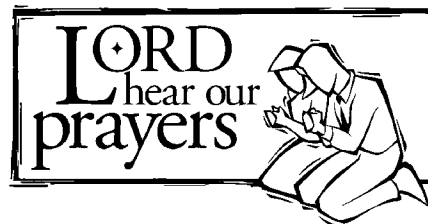
Children's & Youth Sunday School Classes:

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.



Retirement Home: Dorothy Adair, Annie Harrell

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


Thanks & Praise: For the safe return of Joel Lackey from military duty.

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.

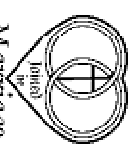
Those Serving in the Military

 12/6 - In loving memory
of Leslie Lepp

 12/13 - Poinsettias
12/20 - Poinsettias
12/27 - Poinsettias

DECEMBER 2009

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM Worship 12:00 PM 5th Sunday Fellowship 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous @ First	30	1 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Narcotics Anonymous	2 5:30 PM - 6:20 PM "Breaking Bread" Fellowship 6:00 PM NO Prayer Team Meeting 6:30 PM - 7:10 PM Evening Prayer with Homily	3 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM "Reserved - Bob Collier" 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous @ First	4 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous @ First 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM Netherland Strain Group 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous @ First	5 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM Homeless Mission 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM Narcotics Anonymous
6	8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM Worship/Christmas Drama 1:00 PM - 6:00 PM Halbrook Party 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous @ First	7 6:30 PM Church Council Meeting	8 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Narcotics Anonymous	9 5:30 PM - 6:20 PM "Breaking Bread" Fellowship 6:00 PM NO Prayer Team Meeting 6:30 PM - 7:10 PM Evening Prayer with Homily	10 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM "Reserved - Bob Collier" 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous @ First	11 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous @ First 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous @ First	12 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM Narcotics Anonymous
13	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 @ First	14	15 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Narcotics Anonymous	16 5:30 PM - 6:20 PM "Breaking Bread" Fellowship 6:00 PM NO Prayer Team Meeting 6:30 PM - 7:10 PM Evening Prayer with Homily 11:59 PM Newsletter Deadline	17 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM "Reserved - Bob Collier" 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous @ First	18 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous @ First 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous @ First	19 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM Narcotics Anonymous 4:00 PM - 9:00 PM Wedding
20	8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM Lessons & Carols 11:30 AM Deacons Meeting/Lunch 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous @ First	21	22 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Narcotics Anonymous	23 6:00 PM NO Prayer Team Meeting	24 7:00 PM Christmas Eve Worship - No Communion 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous @ First	25 10:00 AM Christmas Worship w/Communion 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous @ First 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous @ First	26 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM Narcotics Anonymous
27	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 @ First	28	29 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM Narcotics Anonymous	30 6:00 PM NO Prayer Team Meeting	31 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM "Reserved - Bob Collier" 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous @ First	1 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM Overeaters Anonymous @ First 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous @ First	2 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM Narcotics Anonymous



Marriage
9:00 AM - 10:30 AM
Narcotics Anonymous
4:00 PM - 9:00 PM
Wedding

Board of Deacons



The Gift... (Copyright © 1985-2009 Ralph F. Wilson)

Christmas morning of my fifth year I woke to find a wooden rifle under the tree, carefully carved by my dad, complete with a dowel barrel and a hole for my trigger finger. I can almost smell the fresh paint mingled with the fragrance of pine branches. And though I don't recall playing with it, I remember the awe I felt in knowing my dad made it just for me.

Not all gifts, however, are so personally intended. After that horrendous brown vase I got at a Christmas party, at least I had the perverse joy of watching someone open "How to Raise Rhesus Monkeys" that had been foisted off on me the year before. Then there's a punch-out calendar to sit on my desk reminding me all year long to buy Farmer's Insurance. And the mortuary that gives away bottles of hand lotion every year--my family always calls it "embalming fluid."

What takes the joy out of giving are the obligatory gifts--the expected office exchange, the box of candy you keep by the door to hand the Smiths when they come to call as you know they will, once a year. And don't forget the gift for great Aunt Hattie whom you haven't liked since she pinched your cheeks when you were little.

Really difficult are the gifts that come with long invisible strings dangling from them, gifts so very expensive that you could never afford to reciprocate. Gold and diamond jewelry from a suitor. You don't want to hurt his feelings, but

I wonder how Mary and Joseph felt as they watched richly robed wise men kneel before their child offering alabaster jars of precious myrrh, inlaid boxes heavy with the scent of frankincense, and iron-bound chests laden with gold--gifts fit for a king. How could they possibly repay?

I guess the most troublesome gift at Christmas is the Child Himself. What do we say? We smile nicely and pat the humbly- wrapped present. "How nice of you, God, to have been so thoughtful," we mumble politely. But the Gift lies on the dresser unopened year after year. Perhaps because we don't expect to find much inside except a useless religious trinket. Perhaps because we don't feel any need for God just now. Perhaps because we know that if we unwrap the Gift we'll be obligated to the Giver beyond what we can ever repay. And so it sits ... and so it sits until in loneliness, in pain, in utter desperation we tug at the ribbons and tear off the wrappings, hoping against hope we'll find inside what we've longed for. And so it is ... Unconditional Love!

God sent a gift one Christmas morn, a wondrous gift, a precious gift.

God sent a gift one Christmas morn by peasant maid and craftsman hand.

*God sent a gift one Christmas morn and wrapped it up in swaddling clothes,
For me, He did. Yes, for me He did.*

*God sent a gift one Christmas morn and wrapped it up in swaddling clothes.
For me, for you, for us!*

May we all rejoice in the wonderful Gift that our loving Father gave us that Christmas morning so many years ago ... a gift we can never equal! Let's not leave the Gift unopened. Let's rejoice in it, and share it with all of those around us ... throughout the year! Merry Christmas, for Jesus IS, the Reason for the Season!

From the Deacons, December, 2009



Bible Faith Lutheran Seminary in India

Financial Needs:

Pastor Average costs \$125/month \$1500/annually
Living expenses and school

Moriah School and Children's Home
50 Children in the Home \$35/month per child cost of living

400-450 Children in School
The children from the community pay for school on a sliding scale.

\$3000 - \$3500 / month to run Moriah Children's Home and Day School , home,
education and teacher salaries - overhead

They are looking to purchase equipment for \$10,000 that can produce bricks
used to build churches and also can provide a living for several men – who
could eventually sell the bricks in the community for other building needs.

Please prayerfully consider how you can help our brothers and sisters in India.

Addressed Envelopes are on the table at the back of the church.

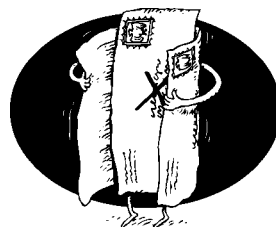


We will be having a Birthday party for Jesus on Sunday December 6th following the 10:15 AM Worship/Christmas Drama Service. We are asking the children and the rest of the congregation to bring a gift of hats (toboggans) and gloves to the party. These gifts will be given to the homeless on Saturday mornings at the Highlands Methodist Church mission that our church is participating in. The children will bring their hats & gloves to the party and we ask that everyone else please have them at the Church by December 6th.



POINSETTIAS

THE SIGN UP SHEET FOR CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS IS IN THE BACK OF THE SANCTUARY. THE PRICE WILL BE ABOUT THE SAME AS LAST YEAR. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, CONTACT TERRY LEPP.



Change of Address

Jennie Kilbourne
829 Coleman Road
Sylacauga, AL 35150
873-1422



Just Born

Anne & Wray Allen are now the proud Grandparents of Avery Grace Allen, born on Monday, October 26 to parents Tim & Laura Allen. She came into God's world at 5:01 PM, weighing in at 6 lbs 7 oz and measuring 19 1/4 inches. Mom & baby are doing fine and give thanks to God for the wonderful blessing.

We made some



Please make a note on your calendars that the Barnabas Bible Study and the Yahweh Sisters Bible Study have been temporarily suspended. Stay tuned to the bulletins, newsletters, and /or website for further information. Also, the Nehemiah Small Group will meet December 4, 2009 and will not meet again until 2010 when they will resume their

normal meeting schedule on the 2nd & 4th Friday of the month. Contact Donna Speegle for more information. And finally, the Prayer Team has suspended meetings until 2010 when they will resume their normal meeting schedule on Wednesday nights at 6:00 PM. For more information, contact Mike Grund.



First Lutheran Church

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

Emmanuel Lutheran Church

Sunday Morning Worship Service &
Sunday School for Children & Adults
Combined at First

First Lutheran Church

2507 Highland Avenue South
Birmingham, AL 35205-2497

933-0380 Fax 933-8879

Pastor's E-Mail: pastortom@firstlutheranbham.org

Bulletin E-mail: secretary@firstlutheranbham.org

Web Site: firstlutheranbham.org

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December 2009

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