

FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
246 South Main Street
Greensburg, Pennsylvania
724-834-1457

Office hours: Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

office@felchurch.org

Chris Combs
Marvin J. Huls

Pastor
Director of Music

WELCOME TO FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH!

We gather here every Sunday to experience the life changing and life-giving grace of God. In this place we discover the truth of which the Bible speaks, “So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!” (2 Cor. 5:17).

We are thankful for your presence among us, thankful to God for His abiding presence that goes with you this week, and hopeful that you will be among us when we gather again.

THE EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

October 1, 2023
8:15 AM & 10:45 AM

THE WORSHIP SERVICE

The beginning of the organ prelude is a call to silent, personal preparation for the worship of God.

GATHERING

Prelude **8:15 Festal Song** (G.F. Handel)

**10:45 I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say
Shall We Gather at the River**
(arr. Anne Krentz Organ)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

The assembly stands. All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

In the name of the Father,
and of the ✝ Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The presiding minister may lead one of the following or another prayer of preparation.

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

One of the following or another confession is prayed.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

The assembly kneels or stands. Silence is kept for reflection.

Most merciful God,

we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name.

Amen.

The presiding minister announces God's forgiveness with these or similar words.

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ✝ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

HYMN “Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service” #712

**1 Lord, whose love in humble service
bore the weight of human need,
who upon the cross, forsaken,
worked your mercy's perfect deed:
we, your servants, bring the worship
not of voice alone, but heart;
consecrating to your purpose
ev'ry gift which you impart.**

- 2 Still your children wander homeless;
still the hungry cry for bread;
still the captives long for freedom;
still in grief we mourn our dead.
As you, Lord, in deep compassion
healed the sick and freed the soul,
by your Spirit send your power
to our world to make it whole.**
- 3 As we worship, grant us vision,
till your love's revealing light
in its height and depth and greatness
dawns upon our quickened sight,
making known the needs and burdens
your compassion bids us bear,
stirring us to ardent service,
your abundant life to share.**
- 4 Called by worship to your service,
forth in your dear name we go,
to the child, the youth, the aged,
love in living deeds to show;
hope and health, good will and comfort,
counsel, aid and peace we give,
that your servants, Lord, in freedom
may your mercy know and live.**

Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Canticle of Praise

Assisting minister



Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.

All



Lord God, heav-en-ly King, al-might-y God and Fa-ther, we



wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo-ry.



Lord Je-sus Christ, on-ly Son of the Fa-ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,



you take a-way the sin of the world: have mer-cy on us;



you are seat-ed at the right hand of the Fa-ther: re-ceive our prayer.



For you a-lone are the Ho-ly One, you a-lone are the Lord,



you a-lone are the Most High, Je-sus Christ, with the Ho-ly Spir-it,



in the glo-ry of God the Fa-ther. A-men.

Prayer of the Day

The presiding minister leads the prayer of the day.

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

God of love, giver of life, you know our frailties and failings. Give us your grace to overcome them, keep us from those things that harm us, and guide us in the way of salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

The assembly is seated.

WORD

First Reading **Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32:11**

¹The word of the LORD came to me: ²What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, “The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge”? ³As I live, says the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins that shall die.

²⁵Yet you say, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? ²⁶When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed they shall die. ²⁷Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. ²⁸Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. ²⁹Yet the house of Israel says, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?

³⁰Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. ³¹Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³²For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord GOD. Turn, then, and live.

The Word of the Lord.

R/Thanks be to God!

Psalm 25:1-9

¹To | you, O LORD,
I lift | up my soul.

²**My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be | put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph | over me.**

³Let none who look to you be | put to shame;
rather let those be put to shame | who are treacherous.

⁴**Show me your | ways, O LORD,
and teach | me your paths.**

⁵Lead me in your | truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all | the
day long.

⁶**Remember, O LORD, your compas- | sion and love,
for they are from | everlasting.**

⁷Remember not the sins of my youth and | my transgressions;
remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of
your good- | ness, O LORD.

⁸**You are gracious and up- | right, O LORD;
therefore you teach sinners | in your way.**

⁹You lead the low- | ly in justice
and teach the low- | ly your way.

¹If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, ²make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. ⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

⁶who, though he was in the form of God,

did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,

⁷but emptied himself,

taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form,

⁸he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

⁹Therefore God also highly exalted him

and gave him the name
that is above every name,

¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus

every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹and every tongue should confess

that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

¹²Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

The Word of the Lord.

R/Thanks be to God!

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia. My sheep hear my voice, says the Lord; I know them and they follow me. *Alleluia.*

Gospel

Matthew 21:23-32

P: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

R/ Glory to you, O Lord.

²³When [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” ²⁴Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ ²⁶But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.” ²⁷So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

²⁸“What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ ²⁹He answered, ‘I will not’; but later he changed his mind and went. ³⁰The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, ‘I go, sir’; but he did not go. ³¹Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³²For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.”

P/The Gospel of the Lord.

R/ Praise to you, O Christ.

Youth Sermon (10:45 AM)

Sermon

**HYMN “O Jesus, You Were Born to Be”
(Sung to tune of #565)**

**O Jesus, you were born to be God’s gift to save humanity;
And one great day we’re moving toward, all life will bow and call you
Lord.**

**You taught the people every day as Rabbi, Teacher of the Way;
O Master, may we learn from you to love both God and neighbors,
too.**

**You are the Bread that satisfies, the light that guides us through our
lives.
The gate that leads us safely home, the Shepherd calling to your own.**

**O Son of God and Son of Man, you trusted and obeyed God’s plan,
The poor, the sick and those in need cried “Son of David, set us free.”**

**You are Messiah, you are Christ, anointed one, God’s sacrifice.
In you, God’s mercy is revealed: We’re saved from sin, forgiven,
healed.**

**O Jesus, you’re the living Way, the resurrection, God’s new day
You give us hope and make us new; How wondrous is our life in you!**

APOSTLES' CREED

With the whole church we confess our faith.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayers of the Church

To stay current with our many continuing prayer needs, we will refresh our prayer list at the beginning of each new month by starting with a clean slate. We understand that many people will continue to need prayer beyond the length of one month. If you wish to continue to have someone listed in the bulletin for public prayer, please call the office by the last Wednesday of the month.

Remembering the caring and generous works of God, we pray for the church, creation, and the needs of our neighbors.

At each petition,
Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Remember us according to your steadfast love as we offer these and the prayers of our heart, trusting in your compassion made known through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

The Peace

The presiding minister and the assembly greet each other in the peace of the risen Christ.

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace, and may say Peace be with you or similar words.

The assembly is seated.

THE MEAL

Offering

Offertory

**8:15 I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say
 Shall We Gather at the River
 (Anne Krentz Organ)**

10:45 Sing A New Song (Robert Lau)

Sing a new song, a song of joy and praise, a song of love.

All praise to God, the King who reigns above. Alleluia.

Offertory Response:

Create in Me a Clean Heart *Offering Song*

Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right
spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your pres - ence, and take
not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re - store to me the joy of
your sal - va - tion, and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

Music: Richard W. Hillert, b. 1923
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Offertory Prayer (in unison)

After the table is set, the assisting minister may lead one of the following or a similar prayer.

Let us pray.

Holy God, gracious and merciful, you bring forth food from the earth and nourish your whole creation. Turn our hearts toward those who hunger in any way, that all may know your care; and prepare us now to feast on the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

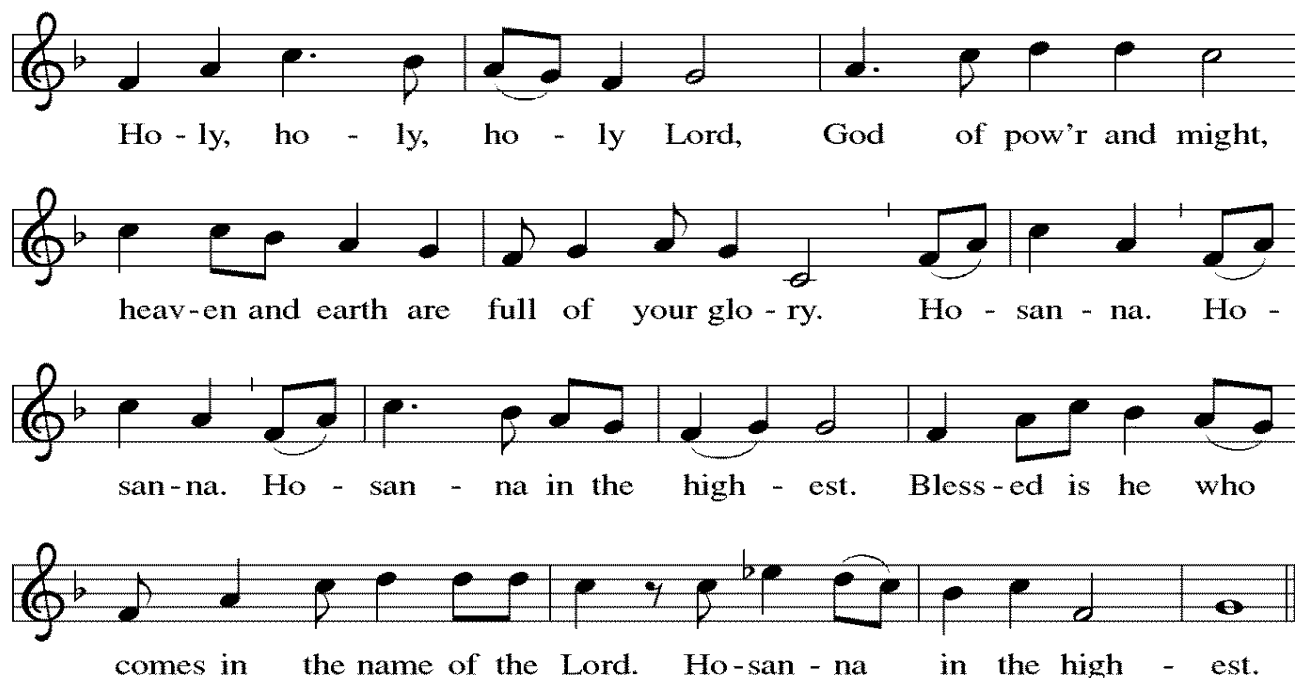
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ;
who on this day overcame death and the grave,
and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.
And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, Holy, Holy



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

Thanksgiving at the Table

The presiding minister continues, using one of the following or another appropriate form.

You are indeed holy, almighty and merciful God.
You are most holy,
and great is the majesty of your glory.

You so loved the world that you gave your only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him may not perish
but have eternal life.

We give you thanks for his coming into the world
to fulfill for us your holy will
and to accomplish all things for our salvation.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Remembering, therefore, his salutary command,
his life-giving passion and death, his glorious resurrection and
ascension,
and the promise of his coming again,
we give thanks to you, O Lord God Almighty,
not as we ought but as we are able;
we ask you mercifully to accept our praise and thanksgiving
and with your Word and Holy Spirit to bless us, your servants,
and these your own gifts of bread and wine,
so that we and all who share in the body and blood of Christ
may be filled with heavenly blessing and grace,
and, receiving the forgiveness of sin,
may be formed to live as your holy people
and be given our inheritance with all your saints.

To you, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory in your holy church, now and forever. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

The presiding minister may address the assembly in these or similar words.

The gifts of God for the people of God. Come to the banquet for all is now ready.

COMMUNION

For those receiving the sacrament please note the following:

- Communion is at the rail for those who desire.
- *We encourage everyone to continue using hand sanitizer before coming forward for communion.*
- *As you approach the chancel, take a plastic cup from the tray.*
- *The communion rail will fill from both sides of the congregation.*
- *We encourage everyone to leave added space at the rail, primarily between family units.*
- *Cups can be placed in the empty trays near each side aisle as you return to your pew.*

- *For those who would like to receive communion, but are not comfortable coming to the rail, please let an Usher know so that the Pastor and Assisting Minister can bring communion to you.*

When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

and each person may respond Amen.

After all have received,

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

The assisting minister leads a prayer after communion.

Let us pray.

God of abundance, with this bread of life and cup of salvation you have united us with Christ, making us one with all your people. Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit, that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world and continue forever in the risen life of Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

Blessing

The presiding minister proclaims God's blessing.

Almighty God, Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

HYMN “The Lord Now Sends Us Forth” #538

**The Lord now sends us forth
with hands to serve and give,
to make of all the earth
a better place to live. *Repeat***

**The angels are not sent
into our world of pain
to do what we were meant
to do in Jesus' name;
that falls to you and me
and all who are made free.
Help us, O Lord, we pray,
to do your will today. *Repeat***

Dismissal

**Go in peace. Share the good news.
Thanks be to God.**

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BLESSED TO BLESS

SERVING TODAY:

ACOLYTES are Aaron Woodley and Benjamin Gustafson.

LECTORS are Jean Miller and Joan Orr.

WORSHIP ASSISTANT is Carolyn Hanzel.

OCTOBER ALTAR GUILD: Kim Woodley and Sherry Menz.

OCTOBER 8:15 USHERS: John Anderson, Becky Blank, Sue Boggs, and Carolyn Hanzel.

*“Be strong and of good courage, fear not,
nor be afraid of them, for the Lord your
God doth go with thee. He will not fail
thee, nor forsake thee.”*

Deuteronomy 31:6

PRAYER CONCERNS:

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER this week Brandie, Suzy, Lois, Terry, Joyce, Cullen, Doug, Gavin, Felicia, Kacie, Duane, Dennis, Stephen, Connie, Kim, Babs, Vinnie, Betty, Pat, Bruce, Cindy, Vivian, Jay, Paula, Christina, Joseph, Jim, Katie, Lisa, Judy, Jeff and Teresa.

THE ALTAR FLOWERS are given in memory of Parents by William and Linda Griffith.

THE CHANCEL FLOWERS are given in memory of Mary Furlong-Leppold by Al Leppold and family.

PRAYER REQUESTS for First's Prayer Chain may be made at any time by calling the church office or by writing the request on the prayer cards in the pew racks and placing it in the offering plate. **If for whatever reason you do not want your name listed but would like to be on the prayer list, just let us know when you make your request.**

INDEPENDENCE HEALTH SYSTEM (formerly Excela Health) does not notify the church of member admissions. Please notify the pastor or call the church office if you or your loved one is hospitalized.

MISSION STATEMENT

**“As Servants of Jesus Christ, we strive to impact
our families, neighbors and the world by sharing
our faith,
empowered by God's Grace”**

**Developed by Church Council
October 2016**

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

TODAY'S Handbell quartet ringers are Charla Keffer, Rebecca Brunetta, Sue Boggs, and Shirley Huls.

CHOIR REHEARSAL 10:00 AM today.

NOISY OFFERING TODAY will be donated to the Little Free Food Truck which is sponsored by Aliquippa, PA's House of Prayer Lutheran Church. This program began with a weekly sit-down meal which has grown to meet the needs of approximately 80 people each week. As the program developed, it became clear that many of the guests found traveling to dine at House of Prayer's facility challenging. House of Prayer pondered the problem and came up with the idea of "The Little Free Food Truck" where they take the food to those in need. The Synod pitched in with help from the Ethel Versey Grant to Synod. This grant stipulates that it was given to provide care for programs that help needy people.

ANGEL FOOD CAKES (home baked or purchased) are needed the first Sunday of every month for Meals on Wheels. Bring your cake to the church office. Thank you!

COUNCIL Tuesday, 6:00 PM.

CHORAL SOCIETY Tuesday, 7:00 PM.

FOOD FROM THE HEART Wednesday lunch continues as a **BROWN BAG** lunch provided from 12 to 12:45 PM. Lunches will be available for pick up by people walking at the gate to the park and to those driving at the basement door on Bononi Way (alley behind the church).

FELLOWSHIP Wednesday, 6:30 PM.

HANDBELLS Thursday, 6:15 – 7:00 PM.

CHURCH OFFICE will be closed October 6, 2023.

A NURSERY is available for children to use on the second floor of the Education Building, down the hall from the Library.

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE last Sunday morning was 84.

PRAISE & THANKSGIVING (Celebrate together in song) at the SWPA – Women of the ELCA Fall Cluster Meeting October 7, 2023 at First beginning at 9 AM. Lunch (\$10.00) served at Noon. Registration forms are available in the church office. Registration deadline is Wednesday, October 4, 2023.



HARVEST HOME SUNDAY OCTOBER 22

The First Family will celebrate Harvest Home on Sunday, October 22 at both worship services. Cornstalks and pumpkins will adorn the sanctuary and you are asked to bring canned goods and food staples to church.

Your gifts will help in our Food Pantry with providing food to the needy in our area. “Now thank we all our God”!

HABITAT PROJECT

The Habitat Project is scheduled for Saturday October 28th. More details to follow.

Suicide Prevention Month concluded yesterday, while there is a focus on raising awareness during September, struggles with mental health affect people throughout the year. If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. You can call or text 988 or chat at 988lifeline.org. Additional resources can be found at the National Alliance on Mental Illness website, www.nami.org.

Installation of Pastor Larry Kemp

Sunday, October 8: 4:30 PM

Trinity Lutheran Church of Franklin Park (Wexford)

2500 Brandt School Road

Wexford, PA 15090

Your prayers and presence are requested for the installation of Pastor Larry Kemp as pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church-Wexford. Ministers are invited to vest and process; the color of the day is green. A reception will follow. Please RSVP by October 1 by registering at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd0Dt1W5g1Jh9CFaK4w4HIOqupdVhYavFfgroCA9_EHm3p4Kg/viewform or by calling the church office at (724) 935-2746.

Stewardship Snippets

*Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. – **Philippians 2:3-4***

When we consider the interests of others something beautiful happens: Our own interests seem less important, our wants fewer, and relationships flourish. Only by aligning our wills and lives with Christ may we grow into the fullness of life God desires and intends for us.

LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE

Through Lutheran Disaster Response we are prepared to serve our neighbors impacted by the flooding in Libya even as we continue to help those impacted by Hurricane Idalia, the wildfires in Maui, the earthquake in Morocco, and help those experiencing other disasters. We know that recovery often takes years, and through Lutheran Disaster Response we will be working with our partners for as long as needed. In moments such as this one, a gift to Lutheran Disaster Response provides crucial support where it's needed most.

If you would like to help, here's what you can do:

- Write out a check payable to First Lutheran Church (or you can give cash). (Note: We will utilize Matching Funds for this response.)
- Place it in an envelope and write **“Maui Wildfires”, “Hurricane Idalia”, “Morocco Earthquake”, or Libya flooding** on the outside of the envelope.
- Put the envelope in the offering basket or bring it to the church office.

Your donation will be forwarded to the ELCA's disaster relief office, and 100% of your gift will be used to assist those affected by the wildfires or hurricane.



Reformation Sunday Fellowship Luncheon October 29

Immediately following the 10:45 AM service, we will gather in the Fellowship Hall for a lunch. The menu includes:

- Slider Sandwiches
- Chips
- Apple Dumplings
- Ice Cream
- Lemonade/Coffee/Tea

Use the reservation form below for the lunch or you may call the church office. Reservations are requested by **October 22, 2023**.

All are welcome! Make sure to mark your calendar and come celebrate the Reformation!

Name _____

Number Attending: _____

A donation to defray expenses may be given if you so desire.