

**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](mailto: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.

# FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 3, 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

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

PRELUDE

**Prepare the Royal Highway  
(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.*

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God,  
who forgives all our sin,  
whose mercy endures forever.

**Amen.**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

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

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Gracious God,  
**have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.**  
**Amen.**

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of ✝ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.  
**Amen.**

**HYMN      “Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding!”      #246**

**Hark! a thrilling voice is sounding! "Christ is near," we hear it say.  
"Cast away the works of darkness, all you children of the day.!"**

**Wakened by the solemn warning, from earth's bondage let us rise;  
Christ, our sun, all sloth dispelling, shines upon the morning skies.**

**See the Lamb, so long expected, come with pardon down from  
heav'n,**

**Let us haste with tears of sorrow, one and all, to be forgiv'n.**

**So when next he comes in glory and the world is wrapped in fear.  
He will shield us with his mercy and with words of love draw near.**

**Honor, glory, might and blessing to the Father and the Son  
With the everlasting Spirit while unending ages run!**

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.**

## Hymn of Praise: Glory to God in the Highest



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



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

Let us pray

**Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen**

*The congregation may be seated.*

## WORD

First Reading      **Isaiah 64:1-9**

<sup>1</sup>O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,  
so that the mountains would quake at your presence—  
<sup>2</sup>as when fire kindles brushwood  
and the fire causes water to boil—  
to make your name known to your adversaries,  
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!  
<sup>3</sup>When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,  
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.  
<sup>4</sup>From ages past no one has heard,  
no ear has perceived,  
no eye has seen any God besides you,  
who works for those who wait for him.  
<sup>5</sup>You meet those who gladly do right,  
those who remember you in your ways.  
But you were angry, and we sinned;  
because you hid yourself we transgressed.  
<sup>6</sup>We have all become like one who is unclean,  
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.  
We all fade like a leaf,  
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

<sup>7</sup>There is no one who calls on your name,  
or attempts to take hold of you;  
for you have hidden your face from us,  
and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.

<sup>8</sup>Yet, O LORD, you are our Father;  
we are the clay, and you are our potter;  
we are all the work of your hand.

<sup>9</sup>Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD,  
and do not remember iniquity forever.  
Now consider, we are all your people.

L:The Word of the Lord.

**R:Thanks be to God!**

**Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19**

(Read Responsively)

<sup>1</sup>Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph <sup>|</sup> like a flock;  
shine forth, you that are enthroned up- <sup>|</sup> on the cherubim.

<sup>2</sup>**In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, <sup>|</sup> and Manasseh,  
stir up your strength and <sup>|</sup> come to help us.**

<sup>3</sup>Restore <sup>|</sup> us, O God;  
let your face shine upon us, and we <sup>|</sup> shall be saved.

<sup>4</sup>**O LORD<sup>|</sup> God of hosts,  
how long will your anger fume when your <sup>|</sup> people pray?**

<sup>5</sup>You have fed them with the <sup>|</sup> bread of tears;  
you have given them bowls of <sup>|</sup> tears to drink.

<sup>6</sup>**You have made us the derision <sup>|</sup> of our neighbors,  
and our enemies laugh <sup>|</sup> us to scorn.**

<sup>7</sup>Restore us, O <sup>|</sup> God of hosts;  
let your face shine upon us, and we <sup>|</sup> shall be saved.

<sup>17</sup>**Let your hand be upon the one at <sup>|</sup> your right hand,  
the one you have made so strong <sup>|</sup> for yourself.**

<sup>18</sup>And so will we never turn a- <sup>|</sup> way from you;  
give us life, that we may call up- <sup>|</sup> on your name.

<sup>19</sup>**Restore us, O LORD<sup>|</sup> God of hosts;  
let your face shine upon us, and we <sup>|</sup> shall be saved.**

<sup>3</sup>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>4</sup>I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, <sup>5</sup>for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind—  
<sup>6</sup>just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—  
<sup>7</sup>so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>8</sup>He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup>God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

L: The Word of the Lord.    **R: Thanks be to God!**

### **Gospel Acclamation**

***Alleluia. Show us your steadfast | love, O LORD,  
and grant us | your salvation. Alleluia.***

Gospel

**Mark 13:24-37**

P: The Holy Gospel according to Mark the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter.

**R/ Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said:] <sup>24</sup>“In those days, after that suffering,  
the sun will be darkened,  
and the moon will not give its light,  
<sup>25</sup>and the stars will be falling from heaven,  
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

<sup>26</sup>Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. <sup>27</sup>Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

<sup>28</sup>“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. <sup>29</sup>So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. <sup>30</sup>Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. <sup>31</sup>Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

<sup>32</sup>“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. <sup>33</sup>Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. <sup>34</sup>It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. <sup>35</sup>Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, <sup>36</sup>or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. <sup>37</sup>And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

P/The Gospel of the Lord.    **R/ Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **Youth Sermon (10:45 am)**

### **Sermon**

**HYMN      “My Lord, What a Morning”      #438**

#### ***Refrain***

**My Lord, what a morning;  
my Lord, what a morning;  
oh, my Lord, what a morning,  
when the stars begin to fall.**

**1 You will hear the trumpet sound,  
to wake the nations underground,  
looking to my God's right hand,  
when the stars begin to fall. *Refrain***



**2 You will hear the sinner cry,  
to wake the nations underground,  
looking to my God's right hand,  
when the stars begin to fall. *Refrain***

**3 You will hear the Christian shout,  
to wake the nations underground,  
looking to my God's right hand,  
when the stars begin to fall. *Refrain***

## **NICENE CREED**

With the whole church we confess our faith.

**We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary  
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again**

**in accordance with the scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the  
dead,**

**and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,\*  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.**

**We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.**

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,**

**and the life of the world to come. 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.*

With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God's day of restoration.

*At each petition,*  
Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

*At the conclusion*

Listen to these and all our prayers, O God of hosts, and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy.

**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.**

## THE MEAL

*(Children, please bring your offering to the front of the church and place it in the “Thank You Jesus” Jar.)*

Offertory

**OFFERTORY: 8:15 Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers**  
(arr. Anne Krentz Organ)

**10:45 Advent Kyrie (David Lantz III)**

**Ceilings of silver, lampshades of gold, bronze covered pillars,  
beauty untold.**

**Yet in the splendor of all we behold, our hearts lie barren and  
cold.**

**Kyrie, we pray for mercy. Kyrie, show us the way. Send us a  
Savior.**

**Signs of deliverance, glimmer of peace. Dreams of Messiah, visions  
increase.**

**Father in heaven, give us a sign. Send your Redeemer  
Divine. Amen**

Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful  
*Offering Song*

Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of  
 bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be  
 fed with the bread of life. Gath - er the hopes and the dreams of all; u -  
 nite them with the prayers we of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your  
 pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

Text: John W. Arthur, 1922-1980

Music: Richard W. Hillert, b. 1923

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Offertory Prayer (in unison)

Let us pray.

**God of abundance, we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, 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.

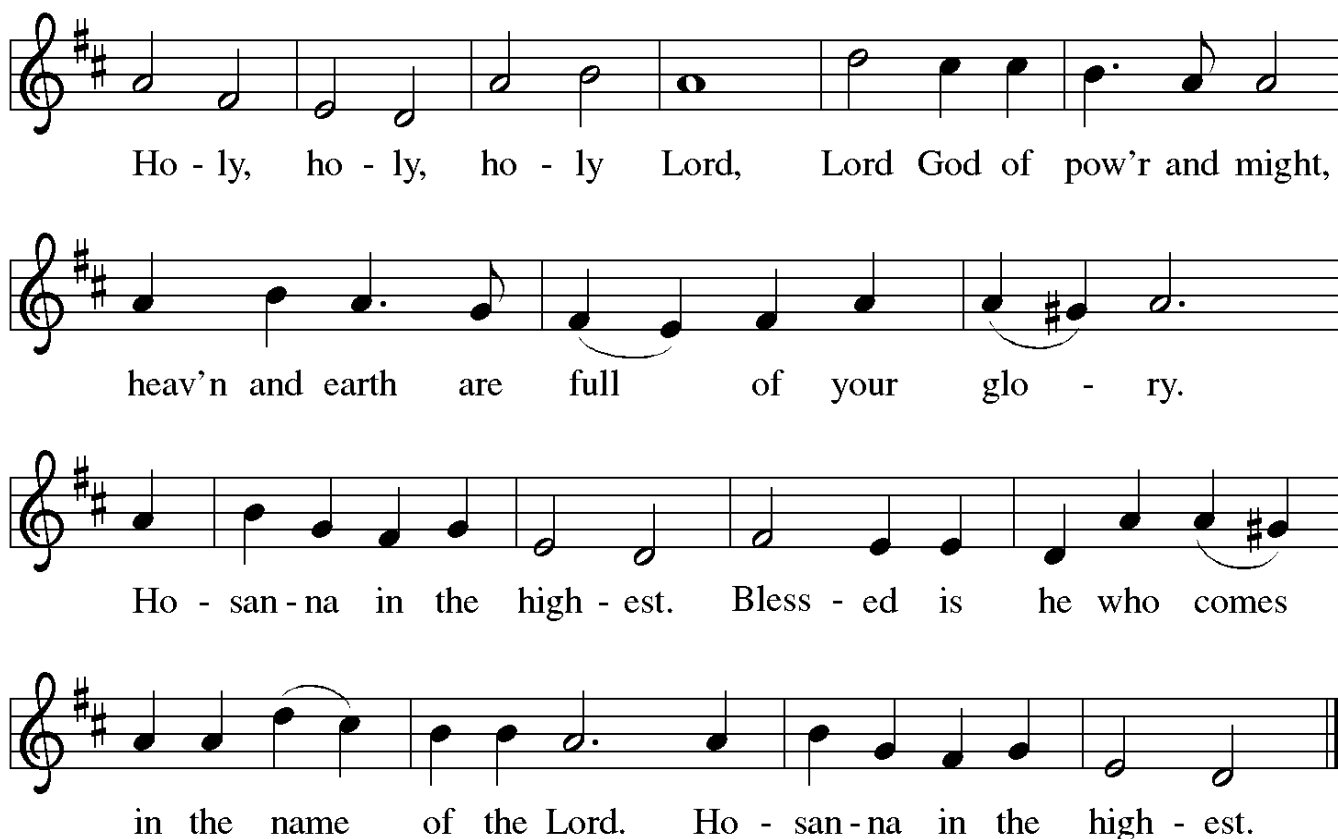
**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

*The presiding minister continues:*

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.

You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer,  
through whom you will also make all things new  
in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness.  
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, Lord God of pow'r and might,  
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.  
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.*

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:  
Blessed are you for the birth of creation.  
Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.  
Blessed are you for your promise to your people.  
Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.  
Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.  
Blessed are you for your Son Jesus,  
the Word made flesh.

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.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:  
**Christ has died.**  
**Christ is risen.**  
**Christ will come again.**

With this bread and cup  
we remember your Word dwelling among us,  
full of grace and truth.  
We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.  
We look with hope for his coming.  
**Come, Lord Jesus.**

Holy God, we long for your Spirit.  
Come among us.  
Bless this meal.  
May your Word take flesh in us.  
Awaken your people.  
Fill us with your light.  
Bring the gift of peace on earth.  
**Come, Holy Spirit.**

All praise and glory are yours,  
Holy One of Israel,  
Word of God incarnate,  
Power of the Most High,  
one God, 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.**

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come to the banquet, for all is now ready.

## COMMUNION

*All who wish to receive the body and blood of Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins and the nourishment of their lives are welcome.*

*It is not necessary to be a member of First Lutheran to receive the sacrament.*

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.*



## Table Blessing

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in eternal life. **Amen.**

## Prayer after Communion

Let us pray.

God for whom we wait, in this meal you give us a foretaste of that day when the hungry will be fed with good things. Send us forth to make known your deeds and to proclaim the greatness of your name, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

## SENDING

### **Blessing**

*The presiding minister proclaims God's blessing.*

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✝ give you peace.

**Amen.**

**HYMN      “Soon and Very Soon”      #439**  
**Soon and Very Soon**



1 Soon and ver - y soon  
2 No more cry - in' there,      we are goin' to see the King,  
3 No more dy - in' there,  
4 Soon and ver - y soon



soon and ver - y soon  
no more cry - in' there,      we are goin' to see the King,  
no more dy - in' there,  
soon and ver - y soon



soon and ver - y soon  
no more cry - in' there,      we are goin' to see the King.  
no more dy - in' there,  
soon and ver - y soon



Hal - le - lu - jah,      hal - le - lu - jah,      we're goin' to see the King!

## **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 Tessa Miller.

**LECTORS** are Mark Barnhart and Dan Krack.

**WORSHIP ASSISTANT** is Carolyn Hanzel.

## **SERVING IN NOVEMBER:**

**ALTAR GUILD** for December includes Dianna Marusko - coordinator, Gwen Irwin and Babs Pascarella.

## **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**

*"How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God.  
Therefore the children of men put their trust  
under the shadow of thy wings."*

*Psalms 36:7*

## **PRAYER CONCERNS:**

**PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER** this week Brandie, Suzy, Lois, Terry, Joyce, Cullen, Doug, Gavin, Felicia, Kacie, Dennis, Pat, Jayne, John, Mary, Karen, Dean, Phil, Jake & Jan and their family, Kim, Craig, Connie, Jeff, Janice, Judy, Nancy, Jack, Pam and Patricia.

**THE ALTAR FLOWERS** are given in memory of Evelyn M. Watts by her family.

**THE CHANCEL FLOWERS** are given in memory of our families by The Boggs families.

**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 Excelsa 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.

**OFFERING ENVELOPES** will be available December 10 in the Narthex. You are asked to pick your envelopes before or after worship, or anytime during the week. Please deliver a box to a shut-in, family member, or neighbor who may not be able to take their box. Please **DO NOT** use your new 2024 envelopes before January first as your envelope number may have changed!

# **IMPORTANT INFORMATION:**

**FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST** between services today in the Fellowship Hall.

**CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST** will resume next Sunday.

**CHOIR REHEARSAL** 10:15 AM today.

**NOISY OFFERING** today will be donated to Lutheran Disaster Relief.

**COUNCIL** Tuesday, 6:00 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).

You are invited to attend **FIRST THURSDAY WORSHIP & LUNCHEON** at ZION'S LUTHERAN CHURCH Thursday, December 7, 2023. Service begins at 12:05 PM and lunch is served following service at 12:30 PM. Suggested lunch donation—\$5.00.

**BELLS REHEARSAL** Thursday, 6:15 PM.

**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!

**RUTH CIRCLE** will meet Thursday, December 14 at 7:00 PM in the parlor for an evening of fellowship. On the agenda is a business meeting, a program and a delicious dessert. All church women are invited and welcomed.

**TEN COMMANDMENTS BIBLE STUDY** Monday December 18, 1:30 and 6:00 PM.

**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 69.

**PASTOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION:** Pastor Chris Combs may be reached either by calling the church office at 724-834-1457, by email at **PastorChris@felchurch.org** or by calling or texting his cell phone at 412-973-4179. If the concern is of an urgent nature, please call his cell phone.

### **LOOKING FOR A WAY TO SERVE AT FIRST?**

We are in need of volunteers to serve as lectors, particularly at the 8:15 service. We are also in need of Worship Assistants and members to serve on Altar Guild. Please consider if this is a way you can use your gifts at First. If you have any questions about what is involved, please get in touch with Pastor Chris.

### **Tithe.ly Online Giving Option**

We are currently finalizing our online giving option through Tithe.ly. We expect to have this giving option available beginning in Advent. Details will be included in upcoming bulletins and on the website, [www.felchurch.org](http://www.felchurch.org).

This option will allow giving through a variety of means. In addition to adding an option for our regular supporters, this will also provide a convenient method to support the ministries of First for those who might be visiting or who don't typically utilize cash or checks.

We have found that many people give faithfully every time they are at worship at First Lutheran and we are thankful for your generosity. Utilizing this online option also provides an opportunity to make sure your support continues if you are away.

# Special Congregational Meeting

## December 17, 2023

Church Council is calling a special meeting of the congregation following the church service for the purpose of voting on a recommendation from Council to accept an offer to purchase the property at 450 S. Main St.

To facilitate this meeting there will only be **one service at 9:30 on 12/17/2023**. In addition, we plan to have a question and answer session between the regularly scheduled services on December 10, 2023. This will be in the Fellowship Hall in conjunction with our continental breakfast.

### CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE



**December 17 Only one service at 9:30 AM.**

#### CHRISTMAS EVE, December 24

**9:30 AM Fourth Sunday of Advent.**

**7:00 PM Candlelight Communion Service.**

**December 31 Only one service at 9:30 AM.**



**A CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM will be held  
December 17 at the 9:30 AM service**

# Stewardship Snippets

*“Yet, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.” –Isaiah 64:8*

Knowing that we are creations of God helps shape our self-identity. But Isaiah adds a wrinkle: we are clay that God, the potter, shapes and forms. As good stewards of our lives, we prayerfully and eagerly invite the Holy Spirit to help us discern how God wants to mold us. The closer we are to who God means us to be, the happier and more fulfilled we are.

**ALTAR FLOWERS** are needed for February 11, 2024. Cost is \$50.00. Please contact the church office if you would like provide the altar flowers for this date in memory or honor of someone.

## ANGEL TREE 2023



It is that time of the year to donate for the Angel Tree! We will be accepting gift cards for the children of our Food Bank families. Angels will be available the first Sunday of Advent, December 3.

Donations of \$25-dollar gift cards for Target or Walmart will be accepted until **Monday, December 11, 2023.**

Our Sunday School students will be making the Angels again this year. Please choose an angel from the Christmas Tree and attach the gift card to the angel and place it in the offering plate or bring to the church office. If you would like to keep the angel, place the gift card in an envelope, write “ANGEL TREE” on the outside of the envelope and place it in the offering plates or drop off in the church office. Thank you!





**First Lutheran will again participate in OPERATION REINDEER.** Your gifts should be new, unboxed and unwrapped. Operation Reindeer is Mental Health of America's annual drive to provide Christmas gifts for Westmoreland County residents at Torrance State Hospital, a long-term facility for psychiatric patients. These items make being away from family at Christmastime easier for patients who struggle with mental illnesses. Please bring them to the church office by Monday, December 4. Thank you!

**Please, no items with glass, belts, razors or other safety hazards!**

**A COMPLETE WISH LIST IS IN THE DECEMBER NEWSLETTER.**



## **HELP US DECORATE OUR “NATIVE AMERICAN CHRISTMAS TREE”**

Native American children need our help this Christmas. The Northern Cheyenne and Crow Reservation in Montana is in desperate need of warm clothing for their children. Every winter, Native Americans face weather conditions that could lead to hypothermia. Fifty nine percent of homes are substandard: lacking water, electricity, insulation, or a sewage system. This year our “Christmas Tree” will be transformed into a “Native American Christmas Tree” Please help us decorate the “Native American Christmas Tree” by purchasing new children's & youth's hats, scarves and mittens. Susan from Saint Labre Indian School stated they have 400 students from infants to high school students who are in need. You may place your purchases on the tree, under the tree or bring them to the church office.

On December 17, we will gather all of our blessed hats, scarves, gloves and mittens and mail them to Susan (who is in charge of Donor Relations) in Ashland, Montana. She will distribute our winter wear to the children of the Northern Cheyenne and Crow Reservation.

# ***POINSETTIAS***



Poinsettias will again decorate our church on Christmas Eve. You are invited to purchase a plant at a cost of **\$10.00** and “lend” it to the parish. Plants that are purchased may be removed from the church following the 7:00 PM Christmas Eve Candlelight Service.

Your purchase may be made “in memory of” or “in honor of” the person(s) of your choosing. Please indicate your preference and return this form with your payment. We must have your order by **Monday, December 18.**

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## **POINSETTIA ORDER FORM:**

*In honor of* \_\_\_\_\_

*By* \_\_\_\_\_

*And/or*

*In Memory of* \_\_\_\_\_

*By* \_\_\_\_\_

*Amount enclosed \$* \_\_\_\_\_