

**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.

# THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 17, 2023

9:30 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

**“O Come, All Ye Faithful”** (arr. Barbara Kenyon)

**“Good King Wenceslas”** (arr. Kevin McChesney)

**FELC HANDBELL CHOIR**

### 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      “I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light”      #815**

**1 I want to walk as a child of the light.  
I want to follow Jesus.  
God set the stars to give light to the world.  
The star of my life is Jesus.**

***Refrain***

**In him there is no darkness at all.  
The night and the day are both alike.  
The Lamb is the light of the city of God.  
Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.**

**2 I want to see the brightness of God.  
I want to look at Jesus.  
Clear Sun of righteousness, shine on my path,  
and show me the way to the Father. *Refrain***

***Refrain***

**In him there is no darkness at all.  
The night and the day are both alike.  
The Lamb is the light of the city of God.  
Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.**

**3 I'm looking for the coming of Christ.  
I want to be with Jesus.  
When we have run with patience the race,  
we shall know the joy of Jesus. *Refrain***

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**

Assisting minister



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

All



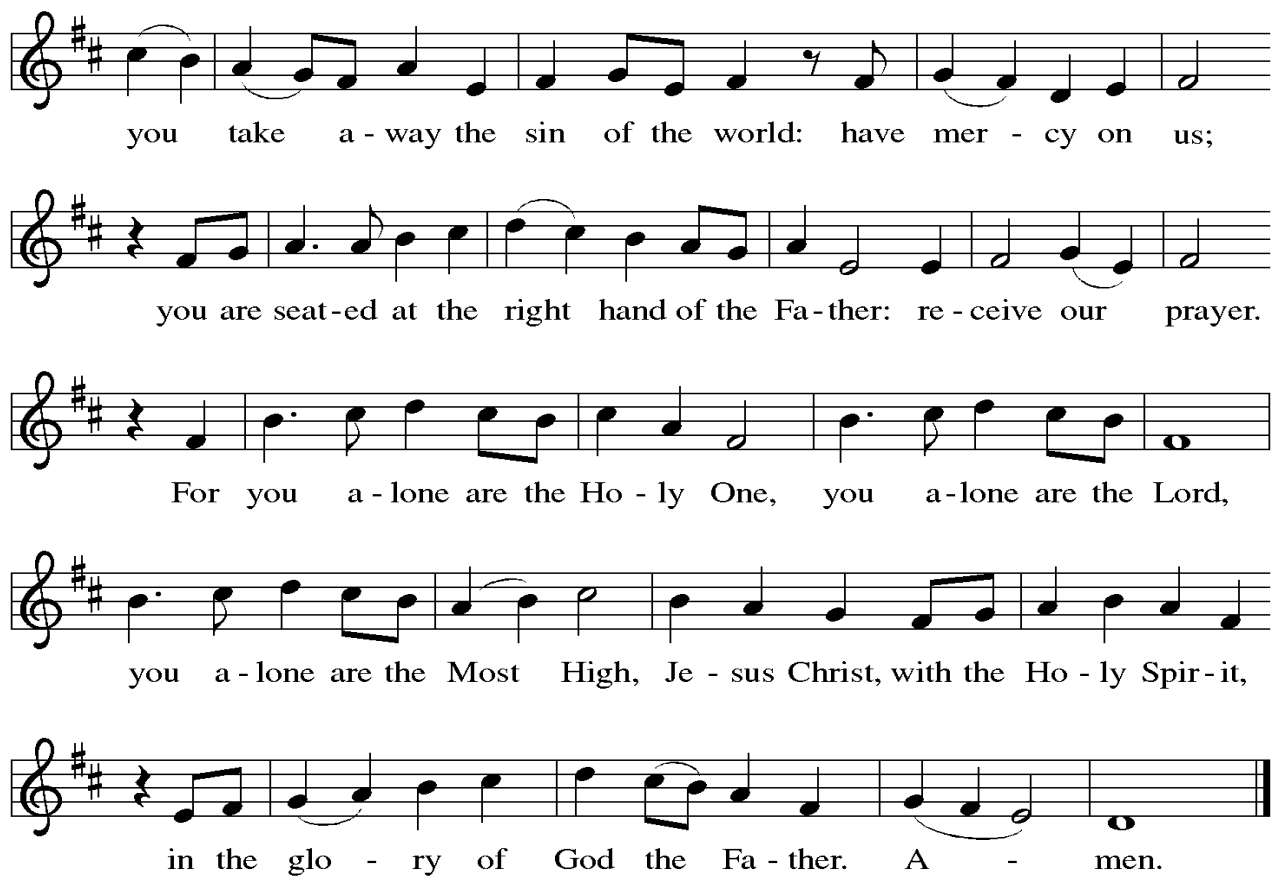
Lord God, heav-en-ly King, al-might-y God and Fa-ther, we



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,



## Prayer of the Day

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

Let us pray

**Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen**

*The congregation may be seated.*

# **WORD**

## **Christmas Program**

**The program begins** with the Congregation Singing  
“It Came Upon a Midnight Clear” # 282 – Verse 1

**It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,  
From angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold:  
“Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heav’n’s all gracious  
king.”  
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.**

**The program concludes** with the Congregation Singing  
“Away in the Manger” #277 - verse 1

**Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,  
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;  
the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,  
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

## **Installation of Council Members**

### **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

## Offering

Offerings may be placed in the plates as they are passed. You can utilize your regular envelopes or the gold envelopes in the pews. You can also utilize our new online giving tool through Tithe.ly by visiting [felchurch.org](http://felchurch.org) or utilize the QR code here:

Checks can also be mailed to: First Lutheran, 246 S. Main Street, Greensburg, PA 15601.

Thank you for your generous support of First's Ministry.




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

## OFFERTORY:

**"Go Tell it on the Mountain" (arr. Anna Laura Page)**

**FELC HANDBELL CHOIR**

### Offertory Response "Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful" # 182



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.

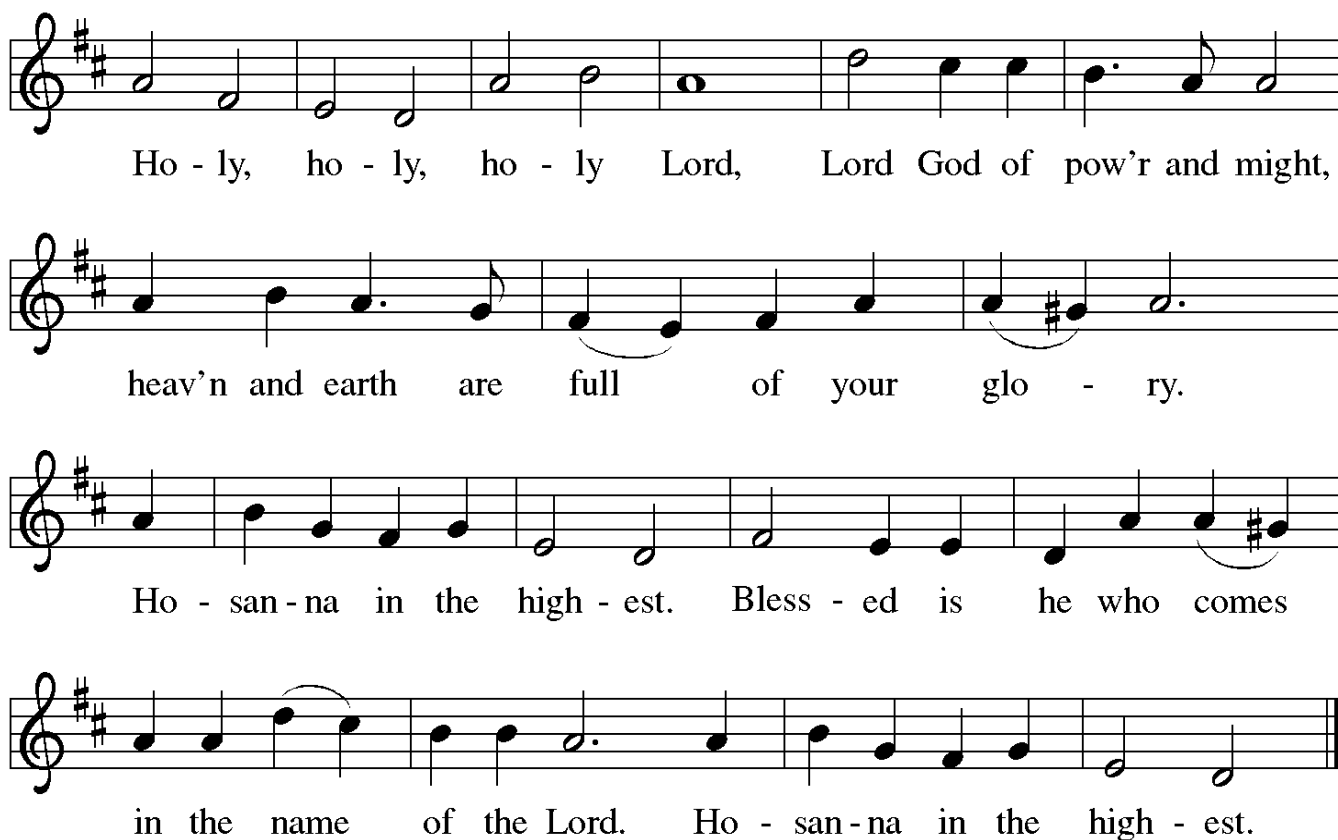
**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

*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.**

- 1 Hark, the glad sound! The Savior comes,  
the Savior promised long;  
let ev'ry heart prepare a throne  
and ev'ry voice a song.**
- 2 He comes the pris'ners to release,  
in Satan's bondage held.  
The gates of brass before him burst,  
the iron fetters yield.**
- 3 He comes the broken heart to bind,  
the bleeding soul to cure,  
and with the treasures of his grace  
to enrich the humble poor.**
- 4 Our glad hosannas, Prince of peace,  
your welcome shall proclaim,  
and heav'n's eternal arches ring  
with your beloved name.**

## **Dismissal**

**Go in peace. Share the good news.**

**Thanks be to God.**

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# **BLESSED TO BLESS**

## **SERVING TODAY:**

**ACOLYTE** is Nicholas Vuick.

**LECTOR** is Malcolm Sias.

**WORSHIP ASSISTANT** is Tawnya Combs.

## **SERVING IN DECEMBER:**

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

## **PRAYER CONCERNS:**

**PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER** this week Brandie, Suzy, Lois, Terry, Joyce, Cullen, Doug, Gavin, Felicia, Kacie, Dennis, Pat, Connie, Jeff, Janice, Judy, Nancy, Jack, Kim, Craig, Patricia, Pam, Karen, Dean, Phil, Cecelia, Cindy, Nola, Tieesha, Christina, Annie, Daniel and Betty Jean.

**THE ALTAR FLOWERS** are given in memory of Bonnie S. Barnhart by her family.

**THE CHANCEL FLOWERS** are given in memory of Louis and Nancy Leone by David Leone 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 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.

*"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*

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION:**

**BELLS REHEARSAL** 8:30 AM today.

**CHOIR REHEARSAL** 9:00 AM today.



**CHILDRENS PROGRAM.** There will be a Celebration after this service with Birthday cake for Jesus and punch for all to enjoy.

**SPECIAL CONGREGATION MEETING** after today's service.

**HANDBELL CHOIR MEMBERS:** Pastor Chris Combs, Tom Flory, Dave Zaccari, William Pfeifer, Charla Keffer, Shirley Huls, Rebecca Brunetta, Tawnya Combs, Sue Boggs, Cheryl Pfeifer, Elizabeth Rowe, and Suzy Flory.

**NATIVE AMERICAN CHRISTMAS TREE:** Today we will gather all of our 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.

**NEWSLETTER DEADLINE** Monday, December 18.

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

**FINANCE** Tuesday, 6:30 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).

**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 91.

**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.

## **CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE**



### **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.**

## **STEWARDSHIP SNIPPETS**

*“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit.”* –1 Thessalonians 5:16-19

Ever notice how some people are always complaining, even when their lives seem (to us, anyway) to be pretty blessed? They aren't living right and being good stewards of their gifts. By contrast, these short verses from 1 Thessalonians give sage advice – Rejoice! Pray! Give thanks! That IS the will of God for you!

**YEAR-END IS A TIME FOR GIVING:** A monetary gift in any amount is a convenient and popular way to show your faithful support for the church or other ministries. If you itemize, the full amount of your gift qualifies for a 2023 charitable income tax deduction. Make certain your check is dated 2023. Cash, check or online gifts must be received or postmarked no later than December 31, 2023, to receive a deduction this year.

**OFFERING ENVELOPES** are available in the Narthex. You are asked to pick up 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!



**FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN  
CHURCH SUNDAY SCHOOL**

**presents:**

**A CHRISTMAS PAGEANT**

**Narrator:** Lily Christopoulos

**Angels:**

Kinsley Colonna  
Olivia Liprando  
Cecilia Mosco  
Aria Tomcyk

**Mary and Joseph:**

Makenzie Jefferson  
Alex Christopoulos

**Sheep:**

Dominic Liprando  
Colton Maga  
Wyatt Maga  
Luke Tomcyk

**Kitty:**

Charlotte Thompson

**Shepherds:**

Wyatt Boggs  
Lincoln Boggs  
Robbie Jefferson  
Johnny Thompson

**Wise Men:**

Levi Boggs  
Nathan Boggs  
Owen Lenhart

**THANKS** to Dan Krack, Ann Ohr, and the Sunday School staff (Sue Ross, Jeanie Grupp, Sue Boggs, Ann Ohr, Dianna Marusko, and Megan Zobb) for their work in preparing the Sunday School presentation today.

**Special thank you to parents, Mr. Marvin Huls,  
and Mr. Malcom Sias.**

# ***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 \$* \_\_\_\_\_