

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.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 22, 2024

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 **Good Christian Friends, Rejoice**
 (arr. Kevin McChesney)
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.

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

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.

The assembly kneels or stands. 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.

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

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 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

#257

**1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.**

Refrain

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.**

**2 O come, O Wisdom from on high,
embracing all things far and nigh:
in strength and beauty come and stay;
teach us your will and guide our way. 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



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 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.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

The assembly is 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

“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.

The Congregation joins on verse 2

**The cattle are lowing; the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky
and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.**

**Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay
close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.**

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.**

Installation of Council Members

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.

As we prepare for Emmanuel, God-with-us, let us pray for all people and places that long for God's presence.

At each petition,
Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

At the conclusion

Savior of the nations, come, and receive these prayers and the pleas
of our hearts, in the name of 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

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 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 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.

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 presiding minister greets the assembly and invites all present to give thanks.

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.

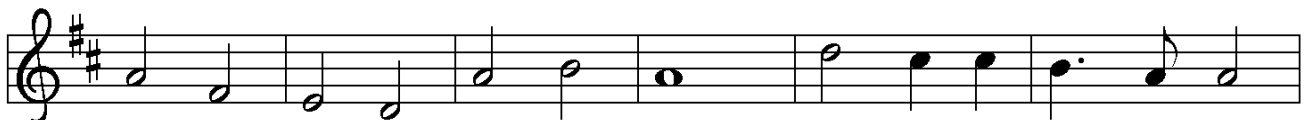
The presiding minister continues:

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.

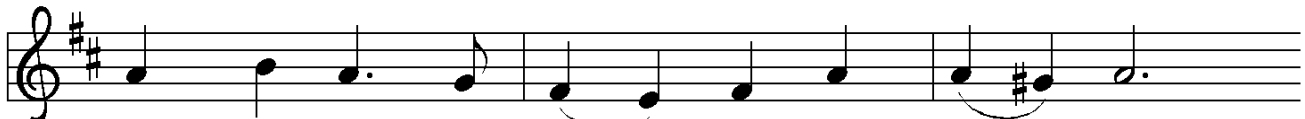
You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer,
through whom you will also make all things new
in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness.

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



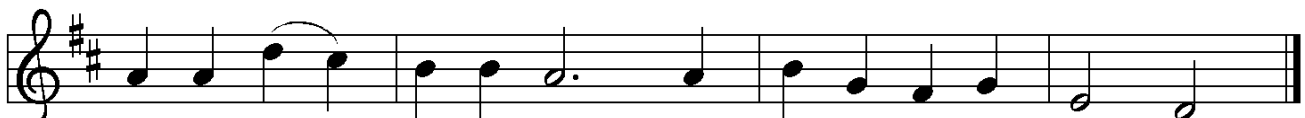
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,



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 baptized 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.*
- *For those who need gluten free or grape juice, please tell the Pastor or assistant during the distribution.*
- *Cups can be placed in the 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.*

The assembly may be seated.

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 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

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

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 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" #257

**3 O come, O come, O Lord of might,
as to your tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times you gave the law
in cloud, and majesty, and awe.**

Refrain

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.**

**4 O come, O Branch of Jesse, free
your own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell your people save,
and give them vict'ry o'er the grave. *Refrain***

Dismissal

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

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BLESSED TO BLESS

SERVING TODAY:

LECTORS are Joan Orr and Kevin Reilly.

WORSHIP ASSISTANT is Rebecca Brunetta.

SERVING IN DECEMBER:

ALTAR GUILD for December includes Dianna Marusko.

PRAYER CONCERNS:

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER this week Brandie, Suzy, Terry, Cullen, Doug, Gavin, Dennis, Larry, Connie, Cooper, Carol, Chris, Hollie, Willis, Brenda, Taylor, Lily, Kiera, Mark, Cathy, Paul, and Jean.

THE ALTAR FLOWERS are given in memory of our fathers by Terry and Charla Keffer.

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.

**Saved by Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit
we share God's love, through word and deed,
in service to all of God's Children**

*"God alone is my stronghold, so
that I shall never be shaken."*

Psalm 62:6

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

PLEASE PROCEED TO THE FELLOWSHIP HALL FOLLOWING THE SERVICE FOR CAKE AND PUNCH.

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE last Sunday was 85.

TODAY IS THE LAST DAY to bring in new children's & youth's hats, gloves, snow pants, and jackets. Curtis 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.**

THANK YOU & BLESSINGS for your service as church council members in the coming year to: Kip Boggs, Rebecca Brunetta, Tom Flory, Linda Griffith, Charlie Kaylor, Dan Krack, Bobbie Laciak, Bud Nusselt, Cheryl Pfeifer, Holly Rowe, and Cullen Shuster.

FOOD FROM THE HEART Wednesday lunch is cancelled this week.

OFFICE CLOSED Wednesday and Thursday.

NEWSLETTER FOLDING Friday, 10 AM.

CHRISTMAS CONCERT You are invited to Zion's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 140 S. Pennsylvania Avenue for a concert of Christmas Music featuring David Bridge, organist, and pianist, on the Steinway Grand Piano and the newly refurbished Moller Pipe Organ. Take some time out of your busy day and relax with the beautiful sounds of the season. The concert is at 2:00 PM today, December 22. There is no admission charge.

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

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.

Stewardship Snippets

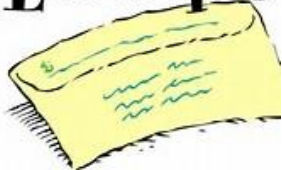
Micah 5:4—And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace.

Peace is the theme for the fourth Sunday of Advent. We remember that Jesus is, as Micah says, “the one of peace,” the shepherd who cares for us, his flock. Steward/disciples draw near to Jesus and find peace in him.



PLEASE NOTE: The security system has been upgraded. If you have previously accessed the building and armed/disarmed the system, please make sure that you have an access code. Please reach out to Pr. Chris if you have not already received a code, the old code will be discontinued in the near future.

Offering Envelopes



OFFERING ENVELOPES AVAILABLE

2025 offering envelopes will be 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 **2025** envelopes before January first as your envelope number may have changed. Offerings received in the church office or postmarked on or before December 31st will be credited as gifts for 2024.



CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

CHRISTMAS EVE, December 24

4:00 PM Candlelight Communion Service

8:00 PM Traditional Candlelight Communion Service

December 29 Only one service at 9:30 AM. Lessons and Carols

FOOD from the HEART: Recently FFTH has found it difficult to keep our cupboards stocked with nonperishables. We are asking the congregation for small monthly donations in the early months of 2025 to assist us with this problem. There will be boxes available in the Fellowship Hall for donations in Jan. Feb. and March.

Here is our wish list:

January: a can of green beans, mixed vegetables, corn, or carrots.

February: cans of fruit or jars of apple sauce.

March: broth, diced or crushed tomatoes or spaghetti sauce.

We appreciate your help!

MATCHING GIFT PROGRAM 2024

First Lutheran has sponsored a Matching Gifts program since 2002. Members of First Lutheran are invited to make a gift to any non-profit, human service organization whose mission is in accordance with First Lutheran's mission, as agreed upon by our Community Outreach Committee. Write your check out to First Evangelical Lutheran Church and mark "Matching Funds" on the memo line on the bottom left corner of the check. Next to "Matching Funds" print the name of the organization(s) to whom you wish to donate matching funds (Example: Matching Funds...Westmoreland Food Bank). Such gifts will be matched by a First Lutheran check and will be sent to the organization. Also, such gifts can be made throughout the year until the total budgeted amount of \$10,000.00 is met. More details regarding the Matching Gift Program are available from the office.



2024 SUNDAY SCHOOL STUDENTS PROGRAM

Robbie Jefferson	Narrator
Olivia Liprando	Mary
Owen Lenhart	Joseph
Miya Perkins	Angel
Sienna Liprando	Angel
Mackenzie Jefferson	Angel
Dominic Liprando	Shepherd
David Keeley	Sheep
Camden Kenderdine	Sheep
Kinsley Colonna	Sheep
Kacie Colonna	Sheep
Wyatt Boggs	Wise Man
Nathan Boggs	Wise Man
Lincoln Boggs	Wise Man