FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

246 South Main Street Greensburg, Pennsylvania 724-834-1457

Office hours: Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

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.

PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD

February 2, 2025 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 Amazing Grace (arr. Dale Wood)

10:45 Lord of Glory (arr. Susan Geschke) FELC Handbell Choir

Confession and Forgiveness

The congregation 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.**

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.**

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

The assembly stands. The service continues with a gathering song.

Hymn "In His Temple Now Behold Him" #417

1 In his temple now behold him, see the long-expected Lord; ancient prophets had foretold him, God has sent the promised Word. Now to praise him, his redeemed shall break forth with one accord.

- 2 In the arms of her who bore him, virgin pure, behold him lie, while his aged saints adore him, ere in perfect faith they die. Alleluia! Alleluia! Lo, the incarnate God Most High!
- 3 Jesus, by your presentation, when they blessed you, weak and poor, make us see your great salvation, seal us with your promise sure; and present us, in your glory, to your Father, cleansed and pure.
- 4 Prince and author of salvation, be your boundless love our theme! Jesus, praise to you be given by the world you did redeem, with the Father and the Spirit God of majesty supreme!

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: "This is the Feast"





Prayer of the Day

The Lord be with you. And also with you.

Let us pray

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

Almighty and ever-living God, your only-begotten Son was presented this day in the temple. May we be presented to you with clean and pure hearts by the same Jesus Christ, our great high priest, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

The congregation may be seated.

WORD

First Reading Malachi 3:1-4

¹ See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. ² But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; ³ he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. ⁴ Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

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

Psalm 84

(Read responsively)

- ¹ How dear to me is your dwelling,
 - O | Lord of hosts!
- ² My soul has a desire and longing for the courts | of the Lord; my heart and my flesh rejoice in the | living God.
- ³ Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest where she may | lay her young,

by the side of your altars, O Lord of hosts, my king | and my God.

- ⁴ Happy are they who dwell | in your house! They will always be | praising you.
- ⁵ Happy are the people whose strength | is in you, whose hearts are set on the | pilgrims' way.
- ⁶ Those who go through the balsam valley will find it a | place of springs,

for the early rains have covered it with pools of water.

- ⁷ They will climb from | height to height, and the God of gods will be | seen in Zion.
- ⁸ Lord God of hosts, | hear my prayer; give ear, O | God of Jacob.
- ⁹ Behold our defend- | er, O God; and look upon the face of | your anointed.
- 10 For one day in your courts is better than a † thousand elsewhere.

I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God than dwell in the tents | of the wicked.

- ¹¹ For the Lord God is both sun and shield, bestowing | grace and glory; no good thing will the Lord withhold from those who walk | with integrity.
 - ¹²O Lord of hosts, happy are they who put their trust in you!

Second Reading Hebrews 2:14-18

¹⁴ Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, [Jesus] himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. ¹⁶ For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

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

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia. My eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples. Alleluia.

Gospel Luke 2:22-40

P: The Holy Gospel according to Luke the 2nd chapter.

R/Glory to you, O Lord.

²² When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, [Mary and Joseph] brought [Jesus] up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), ²⁴ and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷ Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

- ²⁹ "Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word;
- ³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation,
 - ³¹ which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
- ³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."
- ³³ And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵ so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too."

³⁶ There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸ At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹ When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

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

Youth Sermon

Sermon

Hymn "O Lord, Now Let Your Servant" #313

- O Lord, now let your servant depart in heav'nly peace, for I have seen the glory of your redeeming grace: a light to lead the nations unto your holy hill, the glory of your people, your chosen Israel.
- Then grant that I may follow your gleam, O glorious Light, till earthly shadows scatter, and faith is changed to sight; till raptured saints shall gather upon that shining shore, where Christ, the blessed daystar, shall light them evermore.

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.

The service continues with the prayers of intercession

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 the Spirit of Christ shining upon us, let us boldly pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

At each petition, God of grace, hear our prayer.

The presiding minister concludes the prayers with these or similar words.

We entrust our prayers to you, O God, in the sure and certain hope that your promise is revealed among the people, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

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:

8:15 This is My Father's World (arr. Timothy Albrecht)

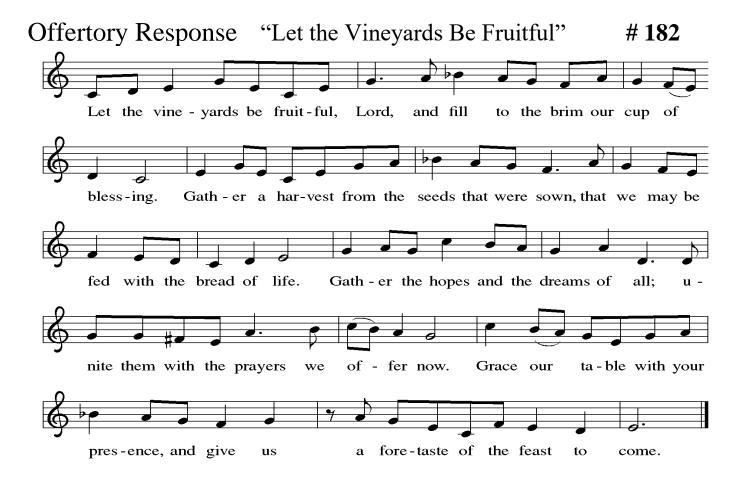
10:45 O When I Sing the Songs of God (John Carter)

O when I sing the songs of God my soul springs up to fly upon the wind of faith and word to where my treasures lie.

The greatest joy my soul can know is grace sung loud and clear. The message of this matchless gift is music to the ear.

I'll sing the news throughout the land, and everywhere I go, I'll tell of God's redeeming love, and of the debt I owe.

If I could spend eternity in endless songs of praise, the years would never be enough to sing God's glorious ways.



Offertory Prayer (in unison)

Let us pray.

God of mercy and grace, the eyes of all wait upon you, and you open your hand in blessing. Fill us with good things at your table, that we may come to the help of all in need, through Jesus Christ, our redeemer and Lord. Amen.

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

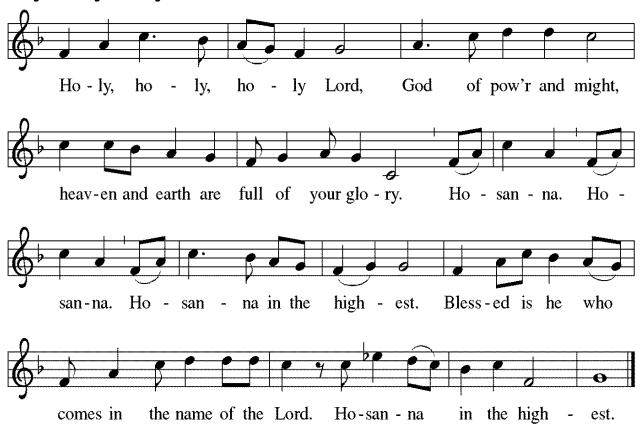
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The presiding minister continues:

It is indeed right and salutary, that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to your, O Lord, Holy Father, through Christ our Lord. Sharing our life, he lived among us to reveal your glory and love, that our darkness should give way to his own brilliant light. 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



Eucharistic Prayer

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

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.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever.

Amen.

Lord's Prayer Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

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

The gifts of God for the people of God. Taste and see that the Lord is good.

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.

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

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.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

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

Amen.

Hymn "Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing"

1 Lord, dismiss us with your blessing, fill our hearts with joy and peace; let us each, your love possessing, triumph in redeeming grace.
Oh, refresh us; oh, refresh us, trav'ling through this wilderness.

#545

- Thanks we give and adoration for your gospel's joyful sound. May the fruits of your salvation in our hearts and lives abound. Ever faithful, ever faithful to your truth may we be found.
- 3 Savior, when your love shall call us from our struggling pilgrim way, let no fear of death appall us, glad your summons to obey.

 May we ever, may we ever reign with you in endless day.

Dismissal
Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

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BLESSED TO BLESS

SERVING TODAY:

ACOLYTE is Nathaniel Boggs.

LECTORS are Mark Barnhart and Bob Errett.

WORSHIP ASSISTANT is Tawnya Combs.

SERVING IN FEBRUARY:

ALTAR GUILD for February includes Bev Attenberger and Sue Ross.

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.

"O Lord, you provide vindication and justice for all who are oppressed."

Psalm 10:17

PRAYER CONCERNS:

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER this week Brandie, Suzy, Terry, Cullen, Doug, Gavin, Dennis, Cooper, Nicole, Larry, Kaleb, Carolyn, Joan, Rachel, Pam, Pat, Taylor, Stacey, Becky, Paul, Susan, Dave, Denny, John, Kiera, Brooke, Elizabeth, Frank, Allan, and Sherry.

THE ALTAR FLOWERS are given in memory of our mothers by the Terry Keffer family.

THE CHANCEL FLOWERS are given in memory of Peter Brunetta by Denis, Rebecca, 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.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST is available today and each Sunday, 9 - 10:30 AM in the fellowship hall.

NOISY OFFERING TODAY will be donated to The Union Mission, a faith-based organization providing resources that lead to safe, affordable, and sustained housing.

CONGREGATION MEETING / DINNER immediately following the 10:45 AM service today.

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!

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE last Sunday morning was 92.

STEWARDSHIP Monday, 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 the church).

FELLOWSHIP Wednesday, 6:30 PM.

HANDBELLS Thursday, 6:15 PM.

COUNCIL RETREAT Saturday, 9:00 AM.

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.

RUTH CIRCLE will meet Thursday, February 13th at 7:00 PM in the church parlor. All women of the congregation are invited to join in an evening of fellowship.

Stewardship Snippets

1 Corinthians 13:4-7: Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

This passage provides a good roadmap of how to be generous stewards of our loving relationships. Read this over again, memorize it, print it out. Live it!

THE PARABLES OF JESUS



Interested in Jesus' teaching through parables? Join the conversation as we explore some of Jesus' most interesting and challenging teachings.

You have two opportunities each month to join. We will gather at 1:30 PM and 6:00 PM on February 24 (Hidden Treasure, Pearl, and Net). Future Bible Studies will be

March 31, April 28, and May 19. Hope to see you there!

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:

February: cans of fruit or jars of apple sauce.

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

We appreciate your help!

MESSAGE FOR THRIVENT FINANCIAL MEMBERS

Thrivent members are given Thrivent Cash Dollars to direct to charitable organizations.

When you are considering where to spend your Cash Dollars, please consider giving your gift to the General Fund of First Lutheran Church. Thrivent Financial considers our congregation and any committee a valid recipient for Cash Dollars. Call (800-847-4836), say Thrivent Choice or email **fraternal@thrivent.com**.

LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE

Over the last few days, multiple wildfires have broken out across Los Angeles County in California, with over 100,000 people under evacuation orders. Sparked by dry conditions, strong winds and a limited water supply, these fires have destroyed homes and businesses and have led to injuries and loss of life.

Firefighting efforts continue in Southern California, and we won't know the full impact until the fires are extinguished. Even as these fires still burn, Lutheran Disaster Response is here to support the families and communities that will be rebuilding their lives.

As Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton said in her statement about the wildfires, "The prophet Isaiah writes that even when fires rage, the final word is faith, not fear. God redeems us and calls us by name to be agents of healing and hope, even amid staggering loss. In faith, we respond through prayer, accompaniment and action."

Lutheran Disaster Response is coordinating with the Southwest California Synod and Pacifica Synod to assess the needs of people impacted by the wildfires. We will work with them to address immediate needs amid the destruction and assist with recovery efforts for months and years to come.

If you would like to help, here is 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 "California Wildfires" 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.

WESTMORELAND SYMPHONY STRING QUARTET. Join us at Zion's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 140 S. Pennsylvania Avenue, in Greensburg for a concert featuring the Subito Quintet entitled, "European Tour"." Sponsored by the Westmoreland Symphony and Academy Concerts, you are invited to journey with us through Europe as we experience music from Italy, Spain, France, England, Norway, Finland, Hungary, Germany, Croatia, Austria, and Kosovo. The concert is at 2:00 PM on Sunday, February 2, 2025. Admission is \$20 and tickets will be available at the door.

YOU ARE INVITED FIRST THURSDAY WORSHIP & LUNCHEON AT ZION'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH 140 S. Pennsylvania Avenue Greensburg PA 15601

February 6, 2025 Services begin at 12:05 PM Lunch is served following the service at 12:30 PM