

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.

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

March 16, 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 **They Crucified My Lord** (Spiritual, arr. Timothy Shaw)

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.

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.

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.

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

Hymn “Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer” #618

**1 Guide me ever, great Redeemer,
pilgrim through this barren land.
I am weak, but you are mighty;
hold me with your pow'rful hand.
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
feed me now and evermore,
feed me now and evermore.**

- 2** Open now the crystal fountain
where the healing waters flow;
let the fire and cloudy pillar
lead me all my journey through.
Strong deliv'rer, strong deliv'rer,
shield me with your mighty arm,
shield me with your mighty arm.
- 3** When I tread the verge of Jordan,
bid my anxious fears subside;
death of death and hell's destruction,
land me safe on Canaan's side.
Songs and praises, songs, and praises,
I will raise forevermore,
I will raise forevermore.

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.**

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

God of the covenant, in the mystery of the cross you promise everlasting life to the world. Gather all peoples into your arms, and shelter us with your mercy, that we may rejoice in the life we share in your Son, 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

First Reading **Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18**

¹ After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, “Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.” ² But Abram said, “O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” ³ And Abram said, “You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir.” ⁴ But the word of the Lord came to him, “This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir.” ⁵ He brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your descendants be.” ⁶ And he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness.

⁷ Then he said to him, “I am the Lord who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess.” ⁸ But he said, “O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?” ⁹ He said to him, “Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” ¹⁰ He brought him all these and cut them in two, laying each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. ¹¹ And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

¹² As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a deep and terrifying darkness descended upon him.

¹⁷ When the sun had gone down and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. ¹⁸ On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates.”

The Word of the Lord.

R/Thanks be to God!

¹ The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom then ¹ shall I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I ¹ be afraid?

² **When evildoers close in against me to de- ¹ vour my flesh,
they, my foes and my enemies, will stum- ¹ ble and fall.**

³ Though an army encamp against me, my heart ¹ will not fear.

Though war rise up against me, my trust will ¹ not be shaken.

⁴ **One thing I ask of the Lord; one ¹ thing I seek;**

**that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my
life; to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek God ¹ in the
temple.**

⁵ For in the day of trouble God will ¹ give me shelter,

hide me in the hidden places of the sanctuary, and raise me high
up- ¹ on a rock.

⁶ **Even now my head is lifted up above my enemies ¹ who
surround me.**

**Therefore I will offer sacrifice in the sanctuary, sacrifices of
rejoicing; I will sing and make music ¹ to the Lord.**

⁷ Hear my voice, O Lord, ¹ when I call;

have mercy on me and ¹ answer me.

⁸ **My heart speaks your message— ¹ “Seek my face.”**

Your face, O Lord, ¹ I will seek.

⁹ Hide not your face from me, turn not away from your ser- ¹ vant in
anger.

Cast me not away—you have been my helper; forsake me not, O
God of ¹ my salvation.

¹⁰ **Though my father and my moth- ¹ er forsake me,
the Lord will ¹ take me in.**

¹¹ Teach me your ¹ way, O Lord;

lead me on a level path, because of ¹ my oppressors.

¹² **Subject me not to the will ¹ of my foes,**

for they rise up against me, false witnesses ¹ breathing violence.

¹³ This I believe—that I will see the goodness ¹ of the Lord
in the land ¹ of the living!

**¹⁴ Wait for the Lord | and be strong.
Take heart and wait | for the Lord!**

Second Reading **Philippians 3:17-4:1**

¹⁷ Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. ¹⁸ For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. ¹⁹ Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things. ²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. ²¹ He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself. ^{4:1} Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

The Word of the Lord.

R/Thanks be to God!

Gospel Acclamation



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and mer - ci - ful,
slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

Gospel **Luke 13:31-35**

P: The Holy Gospel according to Luke the 13th chapter.

R/ Glory to you, O Lord.

³¹ At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to [Jesus,] “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.” ³² He said to them, “Go and tell that fox for me, ‘Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. ³³ Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.’ ³⁴ Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! ³⁵ See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.’ ”

P/The Gospel of the Lord.

R/ Praise to you, O Christ.

Youth Sermon

Sermon

Hymn “Around You, O Lord Jesus”

#468

**1 Around you, O Lord Jesus,
your own you gather still
to share the feast you give us
with grace our lives to fill.
You say to us so lovingly,
“Take, eat! This is my body!
Take, drink! This is my blood!”**

**2 We hear your invitation,
and heed, O Lord, your call;
your word of consolation
is spoken here to all.
It draws us to your loving heart;
it brings to us your blessing,
which never will depart.**

**3 We are your own forever;
until our final breath
we will be true and never
in joy, in grief, in death
depart from you, for you are still
among your people dwelling,
as you have said you will.**

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.

Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need.

At each petition,
God in your mercy,
Receive our prayer.

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

Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life.

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 Tithely 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 Break Thou the Bread of Life (arr. David Johnson)

10:45 The Gift of Love (American folk tune, arr. Hal Hopson)

Though I may speak with bravest fire, and have the gift to all inspire, and have not love; my words are vain as sounding brass and hopeless gain.

Though I may give all I possess, and striving so my love profess, but not be giv'n by love within, the profit soon turns strangely thin.

Come, spirit come, our hearts control. Our spirits long to be made whole. Let inward love guide ev'ry deed. By this we worship and are freed. Amen.

Offertory Response: "Create in Me a Clean Heart"

186



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

Offertory Prayer (in unison)

Let us pray.

God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our 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 call your people to cleanse their hearts
and prepare with joy for the paschal feast,
that, renewed in the gift of baptism,
we may come to the fullness of your grace.

And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, Holy, Holy

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

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

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

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.

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

The assisting minister leads a prayer after communion.

Let us pray.

Compassionate God, you have fed us with the bread of heaven. Sustain us in our Lenten pilgrimage: may our fasting be hunger for justice; our alms, a making of peace; and our prayer, the song of grateful hearts, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

SENDING

Blessing

The presiding minister proclaims God's blessing.

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

Amen.

Hymn “God Be with You Till We Meet Again” #536

**1 God be with you till we meet again;
by good counsels guide, uphold you,
with a shepherd's care enfold you;
God be with you till we meet again.**

Refrain

**Till we meet, (till we meet,)
till we meet, (till we meet again,)
till we meet at Jesus' feet; (till we meet,)
till we meet, (till we meet,)
till we meet, (till we meet again.)
God be with you till we meet again.**

**2 God be with you till we meet again;
holy wings securely hide you,
daily manna still provide you;
God be with you till we meet again. *Refrain***

**3 God be with you till we meet again;
when life's perils thick confound you,
put unfailing arms around you;
God be with you till we meet again. *Refrain***

Dismissal

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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**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.**

"I will put my law within them and write on it their heart, and I will be their God, and they will be my people"

Jeremiah 31:33

BLESSED TO BLESS

SERVING TODAY:

ACOLYTE is Noah Boggs.

LECTORS are Rebecca Brunetta and Bob Errett.

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS are Rebecca Brunetta and Tawnya Combs.

SERVING IN MARCH:

ALTAR GUILD for March includes Bev Attenberger and Linda Griffith.

PRAYER CONCERNS:

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER this week Brandie, Suzy, Terry, Cullen, Doug, Gavin, Dennis, Cooper, Nicole, Larry, Kaleb, Carolyn, Dave, Denny, John, Jean, Sandy, Susie, Kathy, Hollie, Stacey, Susan, Jen, Allan, Kim, Frank, and Ethan.

THE ALTAR FLOWERS are given in memory of Paul Tucci.

THE CHANCEL FLOWERS are given in memory of loved ones by Sue Boggs.

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.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

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

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE Monday, March 17.

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).

WEDNESDAY LENTEN WORSHIP 6:00 PM.

HANDBELLS Wednesday, 6:30 PM.

FOOD BANK DISTRIBUTION is this Thursday. Assistance is needed around 7:30 AM to help with the set-up and the need for assistance increases at 8:00 AM to unload the truck and prepare for distribution. If you can lend a hand on Thursday morning, your effort will be greatly appreciated.

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 110.

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.

ALTAR FLOWERS are needed for May 25. Contact the church office if you would like to provide altar flowers for this date. Cost is \$50.00.

THE PARABLES OF JESUS



**New Bible
Study Series**

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 March 31. Future Bible Studies will be 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 March.

Here is our wish list:

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

We appreciate your help!

March 16 – Lent 2. Philippians 3:19 – *“Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.”* St. Paul does not want us to set our minds on earthly things, for they are passing away. This is similar to what Jesus says about storing up treasures on earth rather than storing them in heaven. Our heart tends to go where we put our treasure. This is why God commands us to live generously: not to spoil our fun, but to help train us in keeping our priorities straight and our minds off earthly things.

SYNOD ASSEMBLY 2025 will be electing a new bishop this year since Bishop Kusserow will be retiring at the end of his term.

- **April 30:** Conference 4 Pre-Caucus Meeting at Salem Lutheran, Delmont (in person only).
- **May 17:** Synod Assembly opens (ZOOM only). There will be one plenary session, including the Ecclesiastical First Ballot for the election of a bishop.
- **June 12 through June 14:** Times to be determined. The remainder SYNOD of the Synod Assembly (in person only) at La Roche University.

Please let Pastor Chris know if you are interested in serving as a voting member, representing First Lutheran.

YOU ARE INVITED to Lenten Thursday Worship & Luncheon at Zion's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 140 S. Pennsylvania Avenue.

Services begin at 12:05 PM

Lunch is served following the service at 12:30 PM

March 20 Preaching: The Rev. Kara Propst

Lunch: Chicken Casserole, Rolls, Fruit Salad, & Dessert

Suggested Lunch Donation—\$5.00

Worship & Luncheon are not held on days when Greensburg-Salem School district declares a school closing due to snow.

2025 LENTEN CONGREGATIONAL PROJECT



The Lenten Project this year, a clothes collection for The Community Closet at The Free Methodist Church, will be a great opportunity to help our neighbors and clean out our closets! All clean, gently worn clothing will be accepted starting Ash Wednesday, March 5, 2025. There will be boxes available in the Fellowship Hall.

All clothing will be accepted, however there is a particular need for boys clothing sizes 18 months to a men's small. Also accepted are gently used backpacks and duffel bags. Many of the clients of The Community Closet are displaced children to whom small stuffed animals, coloring books and small boxes of crayons are provided. If you have no clothing at this time, perhaps you would be interested in purchasing some of these items.

The Community Closet was conceived of 10 years ago when a need for free clothing for people in the Greensburg area was identified. Kathy Statler, a member of The Free Methodist Church, spearheaded the project and has watched the need grow steadily. The Closet is now associated with 14 agencies that assist families and children in crisis. Some of these are Allied Family Solutions, The Children's Institute, Embrace Grace, Glade Run Lutheran Services, The Westmoreland Children's Bureau, and Westmoreland Case Management.

Volunteer opportunities will also occur when the collection is complete to separate the items by gender and size. If interested in helping, please contact Joanie Knobloch or Bobbie Laciak.

Thank you in advance for your kindness during this Lenten season and happy cleaning!