

**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.

# THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

March 23, 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     **I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light**  
(arr. Gregory Hamilton)

#### **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      “Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me”      #623**

**1    Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
let me hide myself in thee;  
let the water and the blood,  
from thy riven side which flowed,  
be of sin the double cure;  
cleansing me from its guilt and pow'r.**

- 2 Not the labors of my hands  
can fulfill thy law's demands;  
could my zeal no respite know,  
could my tears forever flow,  
all for sin could not atone;  
thou must save, and thou alone.**
- 3 Nothing in my hand I bring;  
simply to thy cross I cling.  
Naked, come to thee for dress;  
helpless, look to thee for grace;  
foul, I to the fountain fly;  
wash me, Savior, or I die.**
- 4 While I draw this fleeting breath,  
when mine eyelids close in death,  
when I soar to worlds unknown,  
see thee on thy judgment throne,  
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
let me hide myself in thee.**

### 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.

**Eternal God, your kingdom has broken into our troubled world through the life, death, and resurrection of your Son. Help us to hear your word and obey it, and bring your saving love to fruition in our lives, 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

### First Reading      **Isaiah 55:1-9**

<sup>1</sup> Ho, everyone who thirsts,  
    come to the waters;  
and you that have no money,  
    come, buy and eat!

Come, buy wine and milk  
    without money and without price.

<sup>2</sup> Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,  
    and your labor for that which does not satisfy?

Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good,  
    and delight yourselves in rich food.

<sup>3</sup> Incline your ear, and come to me;  
    listen, so that you may live.

I will make with you an everlasting covenant,  
    my steadfast, sure love for David.

<sup>4</sup> See, I made him a witness to the peoples,  
    a leader and commander for the peoples.

<sup>5</sup> See, you shall call nations that you do not know,  
    and nations that do not know you shall run to you,  
because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel,  
    for he has glorified you.

<sup>6</sup> Seek the Lord while he may be found,  
    call upon him while he is near;

<sup>7</sup> let the wicked forsake their way,  
    and the unrighteous their thoughts;

let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them,  
    and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

<sup>8</sup> For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
    nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord.

<sup>9</sup> For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
    so are my ways higher than your ways  
    and my thoughts than your thoughts.

The Word of the Lord.

**R/Thanks be to God!**

## Psalm 63:1-8

*(Read responsively)*

<sup>1</sup> O God, you are my God; eager-ly I seek you;  
my soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and  
weary land where there is no water.

<sup>2</sup> **Therefore I have gazed upon you in your holy place,  
that I might behold your power and your glory.**

<sup>3</sup> For your steadfast love is better than life itself;  
my lips shall give you praise.

<sup>4</sup> **So will I bless you as long as I live  
and lift up my hands in your name.**

<sup>5</sup> My spirit is content, as with the richest of foods,  
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips,

<sup>6</sup> **when I remember you upon my bed,  
and meditate on you in the night watches.**

<sup>7</sup> For you have been my helper,  
and under the shadow of your wings I will rejoice.

<sup>8</sup> **My whole being clings to you;  
your right hand holds me fast.**

## Second Reading 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

<sup>1</sup> I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, <sup>2</sup> and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, <sup>3</sup> and all ate the same spiritual food, <sup>4</sup> and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. <sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness.

<sup>6</sup> Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did. <sup>7</sup> Do not become idolaters as some of them did; as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play.” <sup>8</sup> We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. <sup>9</sup> We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. <sup>10</sup> And do

not complain as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. <sup>11</sup> These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. <sup>12</sup> So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. <sup>13</sup> No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

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 13:1-9**

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

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

<sup>1</sup> At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. <sup>2</sup> [Jesus] asked them, “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? <sup>3</sup> No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. <sup>4</sup> Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? <sup>5</sup> No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.”

<sup>6</sup> Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. <sup>7</sup> So he said to the gardener, ‘See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?’ <sup>8</sup> He replied, ‘Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. <sup>9</sup> If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’”

P/The Gospel of the Lord.

R/ Praise to you, O Christ.

## Youth Sermon

## Sermon

Hymn      “As Rain from the Clouds”      #508

- 1      **As rain from the clouds will your word come to earth,  
as snow from the heavens refreshing the land.  
Then soften our soil that the good seed may grow  
and ripen rich fruit to return to your hand.  
We praise you, our God, for the dew of your word;  
we thank you, good gard'ner, for your tender toil.  
We bless you, best farmer, for hundredfold yield,  
for harvest of grace in our once-barren soil.**
  
- 2      **As grain that is scattered your word has been sown  
on rocks and on roadways, in good earth and sand.  
Make fertile our soil that the good seed may grow  
and ripen rich fruit to return to your hand.  
We praise you, our God, for the seed of your word;  
we thank you, good gard'ner, for your tender toil.  
We bless you, best farmer, for hundredfold yield,  
for harvest of grace in our once-barren soil.**



**3 As rays of the sun shall your word light the world,  
awaking and warming and healing our land.  
Then shine in our hearts that the good seed may grow  
and ripen rich fruit to return to your hand.  
We praise you, our God, for the light of your word;  
we thank you, good gard'ner, for your tender toil.  
We bless you, best farmer, for hundredfold yield,  
for harvest of grace in our once-barren soil.**

## **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](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:

**8:15**      **Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me** (arr. Christine Sullivan)

**10:45**      **Loving Savior, Hear My Prayer**  
(Music by Gabriel Faure, Text and  
Arrangement by John Bertalot)

**Loving Savior, Jesus dear, who art with me ev'rywhere. Son of David, hear my prayer. Holy Spirit, ever near, giving life for all to share, love of God without compare. Come and dwell my heart within. Keep my soul from ev'ry sin. Guide my footsteps ev'ry day. Be in ev'ry word I say so that from you I'll never stray.**

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

The musical score is written on four staves in a single system. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are printed below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across multiple notes. The music consists of a series of eighth and quarter notes, with some rests and slurs. The final note of the fourth staff is a whole note, followed by a double bar line.

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 “Bless Now, O God, the Journey” #326

**1 Bless now, O God, the journey  
that all your people make,  
the path through noise and silence,  
the way of give and take.  
The trail is found in desert  
and winds the mountain round,  
then leads beside still waters,  
the road where faith is found.**



**2 Bless sojourners and pilgrims  
who share this winding way;  
your hope burns through the terrors,  
your love sustains the day.  
We yearn for holy freedom  
while often we are bound;  
together we are seeking  
the road where faith is found.**

**3 Divine eternal lover,  
you meet us on the road.  
We wait for land of promise  
where milk and honey flow,  
but waiting not for places,  
you meet us all around.  
Our covenant is written  
on roads, as faith is found.**

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.**

# BLESSED TO BLESS

## **SERVING TODAY:**

**ACOLYTES** are Molly Boggs and Owen Lenhart.

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

**WORSHIP ASSISTANT** is Dianna Marusko.

## **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, Ethan, Rachel, Pam, Pat, and Joanne.

**THE ALTAR FLOWERS** are given in memory of Dominick and Genevieve Sheffo by Joey and Belinda Sedlak.

**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.

**CHRISTIAN EDUCATION / YOUTH** 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.

**PROPERTY** Wednesday, 6:30 PM

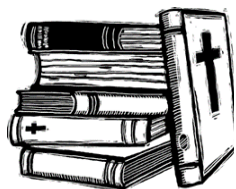
**NEWSLETTER FOLDING** Thursday, 10:00 AM.

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 84.

**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.

### **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. We will be considering the Parables of the Unjust Judge and the Pharisee and the Tax Collector. Future Bible Studies will be April 28 and May 19. Hope to see you there!

# ATTENTION PARENTS OF 3<sup>RD</sup> & 4<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS



We are getting ready for First Communion. If you think your child is ready for their First Communion, classes will be held on Saturday April 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 AM. We will meet in the Sanctuary. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Chris.

**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 23 – Lent 3. Luke 13:3** – *“No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”* The season of Lent is all about repentance: turning back to the Lord, away from our sins, in faith. We know that it is only in the Lord that we can find salvation. So, we do well in this season of repentance to examine ourselves, asking questions like, “What is trying to keep me away from Jesus?” “What is a temptation I face?” What is a sin I need to repent of and leave behind?” Then we turn to the Lord for the strength to leave these sins behind, and for the courage to follow Him in faith and faithful living.

**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 27 Preaching: The Rev. Peter Nordby

Lunch: Broccoli Cheese Soup, Ham & Cheese Sliders,  
Chips, & 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.

*"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*

## 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!