

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.

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

March 9, 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	Hymn of Promise (Natalie Sleeth) Rebecca Brunetta, soloist (see Offertory anthem for text)
	10:45	When I Survey The Wondrous Cross (arr. Bill Ingram) 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.

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 “O Lord, throughout These Forty Days” #319

- 1 O Lord, throughout these forty days
you prayed and kept the fast;
inspire repentance for our sin,
and free us from our past.**

- 2 You strove with Satan, and you won;
your faithfulness endured;
lend us your nerve, your skill, and trust
in God's eternal word.**

3 Though parched and hungry, yet you prayed
and fixed your mind above;
so teach us to deny ourselves
that we may know God's love.

4 Be with us through this season, Lord,
and all our earthly days,
that when the final Easter dawns,
we join in heaven's praise.

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.

O Lord God, you led your people through the wilderness and brought them to the promised land. Guide us now, so that, following your Son, we may walk safely through the wilderness of this world toward the life you alone can give, 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 **Deuteronomy 26:1-11**

¹ When you have come into the land that the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, and you possess it, and settle in it, ² you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the Lord your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. ³ You shall go to the priest who is in office at that

time, and say to him, “Today I declare to the Lord your God that I have come into the land that the Lord swore to our ancestors to give us.”⁴ When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the Lord your God,⁵ you shall make this response before the Lord your God: “A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous.⁶ When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us,⁷ we cried to the Lord, the God of our ancestors; the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. The Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders;⁹ and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.¹⁰ So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O Lord, have given me.” You shall set it down before the Lord your God and bow down before the Lord your God.¹¹ Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the Lord your God has given to you and to your house.

The Word of the Lord.

R/Thanks be to God!

Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16 *(Read responsively)*

¹ You who dwell in the shelter of | the Most High,
who abide in the shadow of | the Almighty—

² **you will say to the Lord, “My refuge | and my stronghold,
my God in whom I | put my trust.”**

⁹ Because you have made the | Lord your refuge,
and the Most High your | habitation,

¹⁰ **no evil | will befall you,
nor shall affliction come | near your dwelling.**

¹¹ For God will give the angels charge | over you,
to guard you in | all your ways.

¹² **Upon their hands they will | bear you up,
lest you strike your foot a- | gainst a stone.**

¹³ You will tread upon the lion | cub and viper;
you will trample down the lion | and the serpent.

¹⁴ **I will deliver those who | cling to me;**
I will uphold them, because they | know my name.

¹⁵ They will call me, and I will | answer them;
I will be with them in trouble; I will rescue and | honor them.

¹⁶ **With long life will I | satisfy them,**
and show them | my salvation.

Second Reading **Romans 10:8b-13**

^{8b} “The word is near you,
on your lips and in your heart”

(that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); ⁹ because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. ¹¹ The scripture says, “No one who believes in him will be put to shame.” ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. ¹³ For, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

The Word of the Lord.

R/Thanks be to God!

Gospel Acclamation



P: The Holy Gospel according to Luke the 4th chapter.

R/ Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, ² where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. ³ The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.” ⁴ Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘One does not live by bread alone.’”

⁵ Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶ And the devil said to him, “To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. ⁷ If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” ⁸ Jesus answered him, “It is written,

‘Worship the Lord your God,
and serve only him.’”

⁹ Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, ¹⁰ for it is written,

‘He will command his angels concerning you,
to protect you,’

¹¹ and

‘On their hands they will bear you up,
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’”

¹² Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” ¹³ When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

P/The Gospel of the Lord.

R/ Praise to you, O Christ.

Youth Sermon

Sermon

1 You who dwell in the shelter of the Lord,
who abide in this shadow for life,
say to the Lord: "My refuge,
my rock in whom I trust!"

Refrain

And he will raise you up on eagle's wings,
bear you on the breath of dawn,
make you to shine like the sun,
and hold you in the palm of his hand.

2 The snare of the fowler will never capture you,
and famine will bring you no fear;
under God's wings your refuge,
with faithfulness your shield. *Refrain*

3 You need not fear the terror of the night,
nor the arrow that flies by day;
though thousands fall about you,
near you it shall not come. *Refrain*

4 For to the angels God's given a command
to guard you in all of your ways;
upon their hands they will bear you up,
lest you dash your foot against a stone.

Final refrain

And he will raise you up on eagle's wings,
bear you on the breath of dawn,
make you to shine like the sun,
and hold you in the palm of his hand;
and hold you, hold you in the palm of his hand.

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 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 Fugue and Harmonization on “O God, Our Help in Ages Past” (J.S. Bach)

10:45 Hymn of Promise (Natalie Sleeth)

In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree; in cocoons, a hidden promise: butterflies will soon be free! In the cold and snow of winter, there’s a spring that waits to be, unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

There’s a song in every silence, seeking word and melody; there’s a dawn in every darkness, bringing hope to you and me. From the past, will come the future; what it holds, a mystery. Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

In our end is our beginning; in our time, infinity. In our doubt, there is believing; in our life, eternity. In our death, a resurrection; at the last, a victory, Unrevealed until its season, something yet unknown which God alone can see.

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 “Lead Me, Guide Me” #768

Refrain:

**Lead me, guide me, along the way; For if you lead me,
I cannot stray. Lord, let me walk each day with thee.
Lead me, O Lord, lead me.**

**1 I am weak and I need thy strength and power
to help me over my weakest hour.
Help me through the darkness thy face to see.
Lead me, O Lord, lead me. *Refrain***

**2 Help me tread in the paths of righteousness,
Be my aid when Satan and sin oppress.
I am putting all my trust in thee.
Lead me, O Lord, lead me. *Refrain***

**3 I am lost if you take your hand from me,
I am blind without thy light to see.
Lord, just always let m thy servant be.
Lead me, O Lord, lead me. *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

SERVING TODAY:

ACOLYTE is Nathaniel Boggs.

LECTORS are Bill Pfeifer and Malcolm Sias.

WORSHIP ASSISTANT is Rebecca Brunetta.

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, and Jen.

THE ALTAR FLOWERS are given in honor of all those who are grieving by Sam and Bobbie Laciak.

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:

We welcome Bishop Kurt Kusserow, Bishop of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod, for his presence and leadership at today's worship.

FELC HANDBELL PLAYERS today are David Zaccari, Eric Combs, Pastor Chris Combs, Bill Pfeifer, Charla Keffer, Shirley Huls, Rebecca Brunetta, Tawnya Combs, Sue Boggs, Cheryl Pfeifer, and Elizabeth Rowe.

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

JAVA TABLE will be open in the Fellowship Hall today between worship services. Fair Trade coffees, teas and chocolates will be available for purchase.

COUNCIL Tuesday, 6:00 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 Thursday, 6:15 PM.

RUTH CIRCLE Thursday, 7:00 PM.

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 108.

NOISY OFFERING March 2nd for Lutheran Summer Music was \$201.

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. 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!

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!

LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE

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.

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.

YOU ARE INVITED
LENTEN THURSDAY WORSHIP & LUNCHEON
AT ZION'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

140 S. Pennsylvania Avenue
Greensburg PA 15601

Services begin at 12:05 PM

Lunch is served following the service at 12:30 PM

March 13 Preaching: The Rev. Robert C. Hawk
 Lunch: Sloppy Joe Sandwich, Coleslaw, 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.