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.

THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

April 28, 2024 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

"Be Thou My Vision"

(arr. Craig Mather, ELW #793)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

The assembly stands. All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

In the name of the Father, and of the

H Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

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

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 of 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.

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.

Hymn "Alleluia! Jesus is Risen!" #377

1 Alleluia! Jesus is risen!
Trumpets resounding in glorious light!
Splendor, the Lamb, heaven forever!
Oh, what a miracle God has in sight!

Refrain

Jesus is risen and we shall arise. Give God the glory! Alleluia!

2 Walking the way, Christ in the center telling the story to open our eyes; breaking our bread, giving us glory:
Jesus our blessing, our constant surprise. *Refrain*

Refrain

Jesus is risen and we shall arise. Give God the glory! Alleluia!

- 3 Jesus the vine, we are the branches; life in the Spirit the fruit of the tree; heaven to earth, Christ to the people, gift of the future now flowing to me. *Refrain*
- 4 Weeping, be gone; sorrow, be silent: death put asunder, and Easter is bright. Cherubim sing: O grave, be open! Clothe us in wonder, adorn us in light. *Refrain*
- 5 City of God, Easter forever, golden Jerusalem, Jesus the Lamb, river of life, saints, and archangels, sing with creation to God the I AM! *Refrain*

Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

This Is the Feast



Prayer of the Day

The presiding minister leads the prayer of the day.

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

O God, you give us your Son as the vine apart from whom we cannot live. Nourish our life in his resurrection, that we may bear the fruit of love and know the fullness of your joy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

The assembly is seated.

WORD

First Reading Acts 8:26-40

²⁶An angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) ²⁷So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship ²⁸and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." ³⁰So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. ³²Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth.

33In his humiliation justice was denied him.
Who can describe his generation?
For his life is taken away from the earth."

³⁴The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" ³⁵Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?" ³⁸He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip, and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. ³⁹When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

The Word of the Lord.

R/Thanks be to God!

Psalm 22:25-31

(Read Responsively)

²⁵From you comes my praise in the | great assembly; I will perform my vows in the sight of those who | fear the LORD.

²⁶The poor shall eat | and be satisfied,

Let those who seek the LORD give praise! May your hearts | live forever!

- ²⁷All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn | to the LORD; all the families of nations shall bow | before God.
- ²⁸For dominion belongs | to the LORD, who rules o- | ver the nations.
- ²⁹Indeed, all who sleep in the earth shall bow | down in worship; all who go down to the dust, though they be dead, shall kneel be- | fore the LORD.
 - ³⁰Their descendants shall | serve the LORD, whom they shall proclaim to genera- | tions to come.
 - ³¹They shall proclaim God's deliverance to a people | yet unborn, saying to them, "The | LORD has acted!"

Second Reading: 1 John 4:7-21

⁷Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

¹³By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. ¹⁵God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. ¹⁶So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. ¹⁷Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. ¹⁸There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. ¹⁹We love because he first loved us. ²⁰Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. ²¹The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

The Word of the Lord.

R/Thanks be to God!

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit. Alleluia.

Gospel

John 15:1-8

P: The Holy Gospel according to John the fifteenth chapter. R/ Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said:] ¹"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. ²He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. ³You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples."

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

Youth Sermon (10:45 AM)

Sermon

Hymn "Christ Be With Us"

(Text: Carolyn Winfrey Gillette Tune: ELW Hymn #392)

1. Christ be with us, Christ behind us, Christ before us, all around! Christ in busy, noisy cities, Christ where hardly rings a sound. Jesus, you're our Lord and Savior; On your love we can depend. Help us see your presence clearly in each stranger and each friend.

- 2. Christ in lines of people fleeing, praying that a war will cease; Christ in battered women's shelters, looking for a place of peace. Christ with people sick or dying, loved ones trying hard to cope. In this world of so much suffering, Christ, you give your people hope.
- 3. Christ with children who must struggle, working hard for daily food.

Christ in classrooms, learning, growing, asking questions, seeking good.

Christ in diners, waiting tables, Christ in homes where children play. In this world of people working, Christ, you work through us today.

4. Christ with all who keep on struggling, helping others to be free; Christ with churches working, searching for a greater unity. Christ, in bread and wine, be with us, giving strength for each new day. In this world of daily crosses, be our joyful, living Way.

Nicene Creed: With the whole church we confess our faith.

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son,* who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

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.

Rejoicing that Jesus is risen and love has triumphed over fear, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need of good news.

At each petition, God of grace, hear our prayer. The presiding minister concludes the prayers with these words. Into your hands, most merciful God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your abiding love; through Jesus Christ, our resurrected and living 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 "Deck Thyself, My Soul With Gladness"

(G.F. Handel, 1685-1759, arr. Hal Hopson)

10:45 "At This Table"

(Text: Shirley Murray Music: Allen Pote)

In the singing, in the silence, in the hands expectant open, in the blessing, in the breaking, in the Presence at this table, Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ, be the bread of peace.

In the question, in the answer, in the moment of acceptance, In the heart's cry, in the healing, in the circle of your people.

Offertory Response:



Offertory Prayer (in unison)

Let us pray.

Blessed are you, O God, ruler of heaven and earth. Day by day you shower us with blessings. As you have raised us to new life in Christ, give us glad and generous hearts, ready to praise you and to respond to those in need, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Great Thanksgiving

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

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

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,

for the glorious resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ,

the true Paschal Lamb who gave himself to take away our sin;

who in dying has destroyed death,

and in rising has brought us to eternal life.

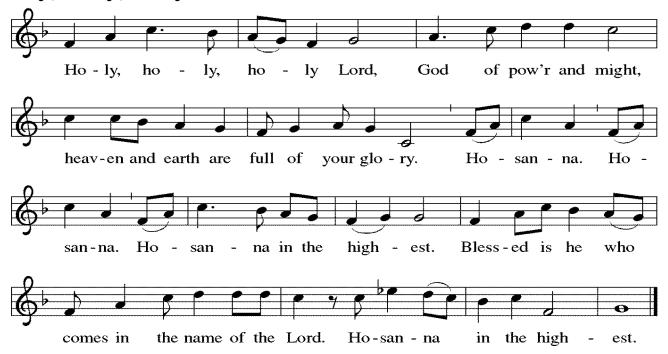
And so, with Mary Magdalene and Peter and all the witnesses of the resurrection,

with earth and sea and all their creatures,

and with angels and archangels, cherubim, and seraphim,

we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, Holy, Holy



Thanksgiving at the Table

The presiding minister continues, using one of the following.

You are indeed holy, O God, the fountain of all holiness; you bring light from darkness, life from death, speech from silence. We worship you for our lives and for the world you give us. We thank you for the new world to come and for the love that will rule all in all. We praise you for the grace shown to Israel, your chosen, the people of your promise: the rescue from Egypt, the gift of the promised land, the memory of the fathers, the homecoming from exile, and the prophets' words that will not be in vain. In all this we bless you for your only-begotten Son, who fulfilled and will fulfill all your promises.

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.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Therefore, O God, with this bread and cup we remember the incarnation of your Son: his human birth and the covenant he made with us. We remember the sacrifice of his life: his eating with outcasts and sinners, and his acceptance of death. But chiefly we remember his rising from the tomb, his ascension to the seat of power, and his sending of the holy and life-giving Spirit. We cry out for the resurrection of our lives when Christ will come again in beauty and power to share with us the great and promised feast.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Send now, we pray, your Holy Spirit, that we and all who share in this bread and cup may be united in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, may enter the fullness of the kingdom of heaven, and may receive our inheritance with all your saints in light.

Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.

Join our prayers with those of your servants of every time and every place, and unite them with the ceaseless petitions of our great high priest until he comes as victorious Lord of all.

Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, 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 risen Christ is made known to us in the breaking of the bread. Come, taste, and see that the Lord is good.

COMMUNION

All 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.
- Cups can be placed in the trays near each side aisle as you return to your pew.
- For those who would like to receive communion, but are not comfortable coming to the rail, please let an Usher know so that the Pastor and Assisting Minister can bring communion to you.

The assembly may be seated.

When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

and each person may respond Amen.

After all have received,

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and keep you in his grace. **Amen**.

Prayer after Communion

The assisting minister leads a prayer after communion.

Let us pray.

Life-giving God, in the mystery of Christ's resurrection you send light to conquer darkness, water to give new life, and the bread of life to nourish your people. Send us forth as witnesses to your Son's resurrection, that we may show your glory to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

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

Blessing

The presiding minister proclaims God's blessing.

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

Hymn "Let All Things Now Living" #881

a song of thanksgiving
to God the creator triumphantly raise,
who fashioned and made us,
protected and stayed us,
who still guides us on to the end of our days.
God's banners are o'er us,
God's light goes before us,
a pillar of fire shining forth in the night,
till shadows have vanished
and darkness is banished,
as forward we travel from light into light.

2 God rules all the forces:

the stars in their courses and sun in its orbit obediently shine; the hills and the mountains, the rivers and fountains, the deeps of the ocean proclaim God divine. We too should be voicing our love and rejoicing; with glad adoration a song let us raise till all things now living unite in thanksgiving:
"To God in the highest, hosanna and praise!"

Dismissal
Go in peace. Christ is with you.
Thanks be to God.

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BLESSED TO BLESS

SERVING TODAY:

ACOLYTES are Aaron Woodley and Corrina Vuick.

LECTORS are Sue Boggs and Joan Orr.

WORSHIP ASSISTANT is Dianna Marusko.

SERVING IN APRIL:

ALTAR GUILD for April includes Roberta Laciak – coordinator, and Mary Caldwell.

PRAYER CONCERNS:

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER this week Brandie, Suzy, Terry, Joyce, Cullen, Doug, Gavin, Dennis, Jared, Patricia, Bonnie, Patty and her family, Alan, Lisa, Karen, Jim, Brody, Shelly, Pam, Clare, Jeff, Jan, Dylan, Joy, Jay, Sandy, Ted, Denny, Addison, Christopher, Ed, Nancy, Teresa, Connie, Caroline, Mark, and Dominique and unborn twins and family, Sylvia, Darcy, and Laura and her family.

THE ALTAR FLOWERS are given in memory of Maurice C. and June E. Barnhart by their 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.

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 5:8

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

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

CHOIR REHEARSAL 10:00 AM today.

TEN COMMANDMENTS BIBLE STUDY Monday, April 29, 1:30 and 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).

FELLOWSHIP Wednesday, 6:30 PM.

HANDBELLS Thursday, 6:15 PM.

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!

ATTENDANCE last Sunday was 102.

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

SUMMER SOLOISTS

May 26	Michele Boulet, flute
June 2	Choir and Handbell Choir
June 9	Marc Tourre, baritone
June 16	Sam Specht-Burns, violin
June 23	Rob Lynch, organist
June 30	Heather Nabuda, soprano
July, August TBA	

NOISY OFFERING for May will be donated to Camp Agape is an outdoor ministry of the Lutheran Church, providing summer camping programs and retreat facilities. Located in southwestern Pennsylvania approximately 35 miles southwest of Pittsburgh, Camp Agape has over 250 acres of rolling hills, fields, and forest. The natural setting allows you to enjoy the beauty and wonder of God's creation while experiencing an intentional Christian community.

Camp Agape is a place where God's children from 5 to 95 come to learn about themselves, the world in which we live, and our God who created and creates all; a place where children come to explore and experience talents they don't know they have, skills they start to develop, confidence they gain to face the world to which they return, affirmation they receive that God loves them as they are and encourages them to grow into what they can become.

PASTOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION: Pastor Chris Combs may be reached either by calling the church office at 724-834-1457, by email at **PastorChris@felchurch.org** or by calling or texting his cell phone at 412-973-4179. If the concern is of an urgent nature, please call his cell phone.

Stewardship Snippets

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. - I John 4:7

Steward-disciples know that God intends us to live in community, helping and relying on one another. We are stewards of community when we practice love for one another. What does that mean for you? How can we love people we may not like?

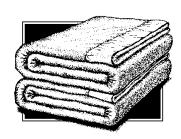
DAY OF PRAYER: Join us for a celebration of Prayer! May 2nd is the National Day of Prayer. Unity in the Community of Southwestern PA is holding a Prayer Celebration on Thursday, May 2, 2024, at Westmoreland Courthouse Square, located at 2 North Main Street, Greensburg, PA 15601, from noon to 3:00 PM. This event is free to the public. Come, enjoy an afternoon devoted to Prayer and the Gospel!

Yom HaShoah

On May 5th at 3:00pm an Interfaith Holocaust Remembrance Service (Yom HaShoah) will take place at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Latrobe.

Yom HaShoah is the day Israel commemorates the victims of the Holocaust (the Shoah). It was created on April 12, 1951, by a resolution passed by the Knesset (Israeli Parliament). The 27th day of Nisan was proclaimed as "Holocaust and Ghetto Uprising Remembrance Day – a day of perpetual remembrance for the House of Israel." This date was chosen because it falls between that of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, which began on the first day of Passover, and Yom Hizikaron – the memorial day for Israel's fallen soldiers. This year Yom HaShoah falls on Monday, May 6th.

Volunteers Needed



The Youth Committee needs volunteers to make tie blankets for our high school seniors.

Sunday May 5th
After 10:45 AM Service
Light lunch will be provided.

Please sign up so we know how much food to order. (Return this slip to the church office.)