

# **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](mailto: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 FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

September 1, 2024

9:30 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. Penny Rodriguez)

### 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 ✝ 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 “Oh, That the Lord Would Guide My Ways” #772**

- 1     Oh, that the Lord would guide my ways  
      to keep his statutes still!  
      Oh, that my God would grant me grace  
      to know and do his will!**
  
- 2     Order my footsteps by your word  
      and make my heart sincere;  
      let sin have no dominion, Lord,  
      but keep my conscience clear.**





This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia.



2 Sing with all the peo - ple of God and join in the



hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless - ing and hon - or and glo - ry and



might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God, for the Lamb who was slain



has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

## Prayer of the Day

*The presiding minister leads the prayer of the day.*

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Let us pray.

*A brief silence is kept before the prayer.*

**O God our strength, without you we are weak and wayward creatures. Protect us from all dangers that attack us from the outside, and cleanse us from all evil that arises from within ourselves, that we may be preserved through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior, and Lord.**

**Amen.**

*The assembly is seated.*

# WORD

## First Reading

## Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9

<sup>1</sup>So now, Israel, give heed to the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you to observe, so that you may live to enter and occupy the land that the Lord, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. <sup>2</sup>You must neither add anything to what I command you nor take away anything from it, but keep the commandments of the Lord your God with which I am charging you.

<sup>6</sup>You must observe them diligently, for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!” <sup>7</sup>For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is whenever we call to him? <sup>8</sup>And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today?

<sup>9</sup>But take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children’s children.

The Word of the Lord.

**R/Thanks be to God!**

### Psalm 15:

*(Read Responsively)*

<sup>1</sup>Lord, who may dwell in your | tabernacle?

Who may abide upon your | holy hill?

<sup>2</sup>**Those who lead a blameless life and do | what is right,  
who speak the truth | from their heart;**

<sup>3</sup>they do not slander with the tongue, they do no evil | to their friends;  
they do not cast discredit up- | on a neighbor.

<sup>4</sup>**In their sight the wicked are rejected, but they honor those  
who | fear the Lord.**

**They have sworn upon their health and do not take | back  
their word.**

<sup>5</sup>They do not give their money in hope of gain, nor do they take  
bribes a- | gainst the innocent.

Those who do these things shall never be | overthrown.

## **Second Reading: James 1:17-27**

<sup>17</sup>Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. <sup>18</sup>In fulfillment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

<sup>19</sup>You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; <sup>20</sup>for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. <sup>21</sup>Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls.

<sup>22</sup>But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. <sup>23</sup>For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; <sup>24</sup>for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. <sup>25</sup>But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing.

<sup>26</sup>If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. <sup>27</sup>Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

The Word of the Lord.

**R/Thanks be to God!**

## **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

***Alleluia.* God gave us birth by the word of truth so that we would become a kind of first fruits of creation. *Alleluia.***

Gospel

**Mark 7:1-8, 14-15,21-23**

P: The Holy Gospel according to Mark the seventh chapter.

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

<sup>1</sup>Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around [Jesus], <sup>2</sup>they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. <sup>3</sup>(For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; <sup>4</sup>and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) <sup>5</sup>So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?” <sup>6</sup>He said to them, “Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written,

‘This people honors me with their lips,  
but their hearts are far from me;

<sup>7</sup>in vain do they worship me,  
teaching human precepts as doctrines.’

<sup>8</sup>You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.”

<sup>14</sup>Then he called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand: <sup>15</sup>there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.

<sup>21</sup>“For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, <sup>22</sup>adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. <sup>23</sup>All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

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

## Youth Sermon

## Sermon



**HYMN “Let Justice Flow like Streams” #717**

- 1 Let justice flow like streams  
of sparkling water, pure,  
enabling growth, refreshing life,  
abundant, cleansing, sure.**
- 2 Let righteousness roll on  
as others' cares we heed,  
an ever-flowing stream of faith  
translated into deed.**
- 3 So may God's plumb line, straight,  
define our measure true,  
and justice, right, and peace pervade  
this world our whole life through.**

**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**

## 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.*

Drawn together in the power of the Holy Spirit, we pray with confidence for the church, God's good creation, and all who are in need.

*At each petition,*  
Merciful God,  
**receive our prayer.**

*The presiding minister concludes the prayers with these words.*  
We entrust these and all our prayers to you, holy God, in the name of your beloved child, Jesus Christ, our Savior.  
**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](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 "I Need Thee Every Hour" (arr. Penny Rodriguez)

### Offertory Response:

#### Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful *Offering Song*



Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of  
bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be  
fed with the bread of life. Gath - er the hopes and the dreams of all; u -  
nite them with the prayers we of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your  
pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

## Offertory Prayer (in unison)

Let us pray.

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

**Amen.**

## Great Thanksgiving

*The 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,  
through our Savior Jesus Christ;  
who on this day overcame death and the grave,  
and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.  
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.*

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

In the night in which he was betrayed,  
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;  
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink, saying:  
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

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

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

**Amen.**

## **Lord's Prayer**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.**

## **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

The risen Christ is made known to us in the breaking of the bread. Come, 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.*

*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.

Gracious God, in this meal you have drawn us to your heart, and nourished us at your table with food and drink, the body and blood of Christ. Now send us forth to be your people in the world, and to proclaim your truth this day and evermore, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and 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      “This Is My Father's World”      #824

- 1 This is my Father's world, and to my list'ning ears  
all nature sings, and round me rings the music of the spheres.  
This is my Father's world; I rest me in the thought  
of rocks and trees, of skies and seas; his hand the wonders  
wrought.**
- 2 This is my Father's world; the birds their carols raise;  
the morning light, the lily white, declare their maker's praise.  
This is my Father's world; he shines in all that's fair.  
In the rustling grass I hear him pass; he speaks to me ev'rywhere.**
- 3 This is my Father's world; oh, let me not forget  
that, though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet.  
This is my Father's world; why should my heart be sad?  
The Lord is king, let heaven ring; God reigns, let earth be glad!**



Dismissal

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

**Thanks be to God.**

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## **BLESSED TO BLESS**

### **SERVING TODAY:**

**LECTOR** is Mark Barnhart.

**WORSHIP ASSISTANT** is Carolyn Hanzel.

### **SERVING IN SEPTEMBER:**

**ALTAR GUILD** for September includes Roberta Laciak and Joan Orr.

### **PRAYER CONCERNS:**

**PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER** this week Brandie, Suzy, Terry, Joyce, Cullen, Doug, Gavin, Dennis, Connie, Larry, Joanne, Marie, Jean, Kelly, Bob, Ian, Becky, Marcee, Todd, David, Reece, Pat, Rachel, Daniel, Jessica and her family, and the family of James Edward Skodak.

**THE ALTAR FLOWERS** are given in memory of Ralph G. and Jean Steel by Suzy and Tom Flory and sons.

**THE CHANCEL FLOWERS** are given in memory of mother, Pauline Nelson, by Vicki Moyer.

**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:**

**SUMMER WORSHIP SCHEDULE** ends today. Sunday, September 8 is Rally Day, and we return to 8:15 & 10:45 Word and Sacrament; 9:30 Sunday School.

**NOISY OFFERING TODAY for Lutheran World Relief - Ukraine**  
Since conflict began in late February, millions of people have fled Ukraine, with millions more in dire need within their country.

Thanks to an unprecedented outpouring of support from donors like you, the Lutheran World Relief Humanitarian Action team rapidly began working with partners to help suffering people in Poland and in Ukraine. Your generosity helped us deploy experts to support our relief operations, including a program manager, a health advisor, and an advisor to lead our efforts to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse in Ukraine and for Ukrainian refugees. Our response in Ukraine includes: Medical supplies and equipment. Partnerships with networks throughout Ukraine to provide shelter. Identifying key gaps in health services. Emergency cash for Ukrainian refugees in Poland. Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. Supporting the Evangelical-Augsburg Church of St. Martin in Krakow, Poland, which established a hostel for Ukrainian women and children. Shipping and distributing LWR Quilts and Kits.

**ATTENDANCE** last Sunday was 63.

**OFFICE CLOSED** Monday, September 2.

**EXECUTIVE** 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).

**FELLOWSHIP** Wednesday, 6:30 PM

**HANDBELL CHOIR** Thursday, 6:15 PM.

**CHOIR** rehearsals begin Sunday, September 8 at 10:00 AM.

**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!

**RUTH CIRCLE** will meet on Thursday September 12 at 7:00 PM in the church parlor. All women of the congregation are invited and welcomed.

**CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST** The sign-up calendar and instructions are on the table in the narthex. Please sign up for a Sunday.

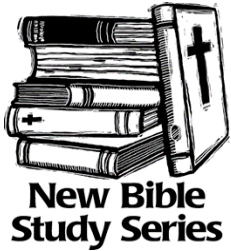
**PASTOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION:** Pastor Chris Combs may be reached either by calling the church office at 724-834-1457, by email at **PastorChris@felchurch.org** or by calling or texting his cell phone at 412-973-4179. If the concern is of an urgent nature, please call his cell phone.

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

*“Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another... .”*

*John 1:11*

## THE PARABLES OF JESUS



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

You have two opportunities each month to join. We will gather at 1:30 PM and 6:00 PM on September 16, October 14, November 18, and December 16. Hope to see you there!

### Stewardship Snippets

James 1:17 – Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.

*Make a list of the blessings in your life. Go ahead! These are gifts to you from God, the source of all. Now review the list and pray for each, "I thank God for ...." Do this every day and see how you feel.*

**YOU ARE INVITED  
FIRST 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

September 5 Lunch: Hot Dogs, Macaroni Salad, Baked Bean Casserole,  
and Dessert

# **Bibles for Love Packages**

**Bibles WILL BE COLLECTED THROUGH RALLY DAY**

Boxes for your items will be located in the Narthex, the Education Building, and the Fellowship Hall.

For more information on Love Packages check them out on [lovepackages.org](http://lovepackages.org)

## **FFTH NEEDS YOU!**

**Anyone who enjoys fellowship and working in the kitchen, please consider volunteering at FFTH. Hands are needed! Contact Bobbie Laciak if interested.**



## **Rally Day Cookies for First Responders! Sunday, September 8th Rally Day**

**Hands are needed to:**

- **Make cookies!**
- **Deliver cookies to the Fellowship Hall by 10 am Saturday, September 7<sup>th</sup>!**
- **Pack cookies on Saturday, September 7<sup>th</sup>.**
- **Deliver cookies to First Responders after Church on Sunday, September 8<sup>th</sup>.**

**Our Thanks for your help!**

**The Christian Outreach Committee**



## RALLY DAY PLANNED for SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

On September 8, we will kick off another year of Christian learning and mission with a Rally Day. Sunday Church School resumes from 9:30 to 10:30 AM with classes for all ages.

Immediately following the 10:45 AM service, we will gather in the Fellowship Hall for a lunch. The menu includes:

Sloppy Joes / hotdogs

Chips

Sundae Bar

Lemonade / Coffee / Tea

Please complete a reservation form (below) and return it to the church office or you may call the church office. Reservations are requested by **September 1, 2024**.

All are welcome! Make sure to mark your calendar to kick off this year of learning and mission!

\*\*\*\*\*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Number attending \_\_\_\_\_

*A donation to defray expenses may be given if you so desire.*