

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 FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

September 10, 2023
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 **Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus**
(arr. Paul Manz)

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.

One of the following or another confession is prayed.

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 with these or similar words.

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 “Blest Be the Tie That Binds”

#656

- 1 Blest be the tie that binds
 our hearts in Christian love;
 the unity of heart and mind
 is like to that above.**
- 2 Before our Father's throne
 we pour our ardent prayers;
 our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
 our comforts and our cares.**
- 3 We share our mutual woes,
 our mutual burdens bear,
 and often for each other flows
 the sympathizing tear.**

**4 From sorrow, toil, and pain,
and sin we shall be free;
and perfect love and friendship reign
through all eternity.**

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

Refrain

Assisting minister



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

All



1 Wor-thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us



free to be peo-ple of God. Pow-er and rich-es and wis-dom and



strength, and hon-or and bless-ing and glo-ry are his.

Refrain



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.

Final refrain

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 Lord God, enliven and preserve your church with your perpetual mercy. Without your help, we mortals will fail; remove far from us everything that is harmful, and lead us toward all that gives life and salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

The assembly is seated.

WORD

First Reading **Ezekiel 33:7-11**

⁷So you, mortal, I have made a sentinel for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. ⁸If I say to the wicked, “O wicked ones, you shall surely die,” and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but their blood I will require at your hand. ⁹But if you warn the wicked to turn from their ways, and they do not turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but you will have saved your life.

¹⁰Now you, mortal, say to the house of Israel, Thus you have said: “Our transgressions and our sins weigh upon us, and we waste away because of them; how then can we live?” ¹¹Say to them, As I live, says the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from their ways and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?

The Word of the Lord.

R/Thanks be to God!

Psalm 119:33-40

³³Teach me, O LORD, the way [|] of your statutes,
and I shall keep it [|] to the end.

³⁴**Give me understanding, and I shall [|] keep your teaching;
I shall keep it with [|] all my heart.**

³⁵Lead me in the path of [|] your commandments,
for that is [|] my desire.

³⁶**Incline my heart to [|] your decrees
and not to [|] unjust gain.**

³⁷Turn my eyes from be- [|] holding falsehood;
give me life [|] in your way.

³⁸**Fulfill your promise [|] to your servant,
which is for [|] those who fear you.**

³⁹Turn away the reproach [|] that I dread,
because your judg- [|] ments are good.
⁴⁰**Behold, I long for [|] your commandments;
by your righteousness en- [|] liven me.**

Second Reading

Romans 13:8-14

⁸Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet”; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁰Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

¹¹Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; ¹²the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; ¹³let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

The Word of the Lord.

R/Thanks be to God!

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia.* In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. *Alleluia.

Gospel

Matthew 18:15-20

P: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

R/ Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹⁵“If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. ¹⁶But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

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

Youth Sermon (10:45 AM)

Sermon

HYMN “When We Are Living” #639

- 1 When we are living, it is in Christ Jesus,
and when we’re dying, it is in the Lord.
Both in our living and in our dying,
we belong to God, we belong to God.**
- 2 ’Mid times of sorrow and in times of pain,
when sensing beauty or in love’s embrace,
whether we suffer, or sing rejoicing,
we belong to God, we belong to God.**
- 3 Across this wide world, we shall always find
those who are crying with no peace of mind;
and when we help them, or when we feed them,
we belong to God, we belong to God.**

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.

Remembering the caring and generous works of God, we pray for the church, creation, and the needs of our neighbors.

At each petition,
Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Remember us according to your steadfast love as we offer these and the prayers of our heart, trusting in your compassion made known through Jesus Christ. **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.

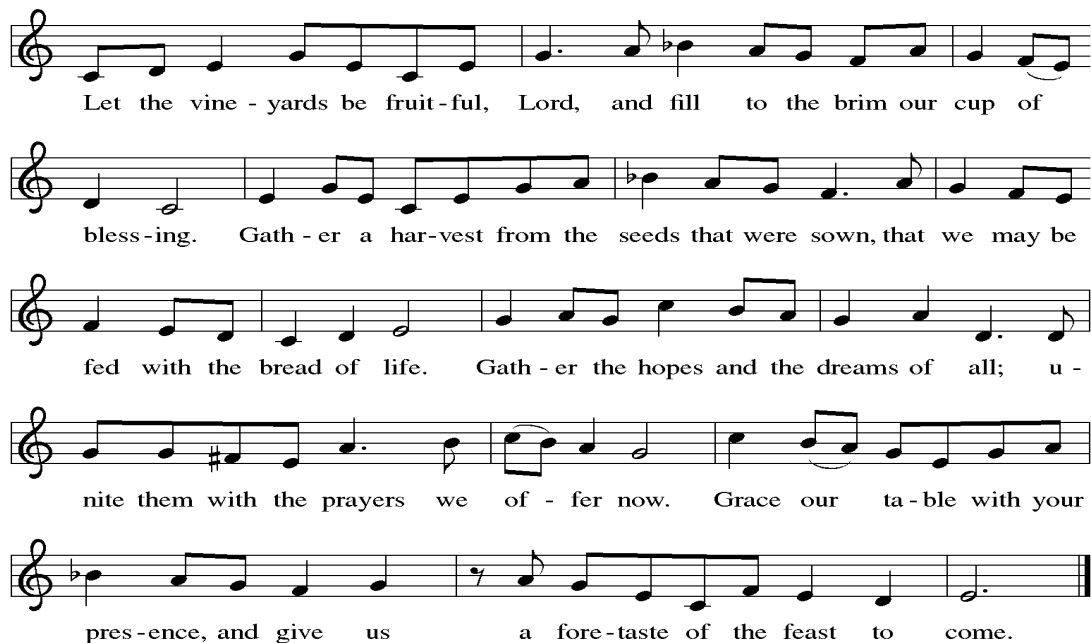
THE MEAL

Offering

Offertory **O Master Let Me Walk with Thee**
(arr. Dale Wood)

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.

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Music: Richard W. Hillert, b. 1923
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Offertory Prayer (in unison)

After the table is set, the assisting minister may lead one of the following or a similar prayer.

Let us pray.

Holy God, gracious and merciful, you bring forth food from the earth and nourish your whole creation. Turn our hearts toward those who hunger in any way, that all may know your care; and prepare us now to feast on the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

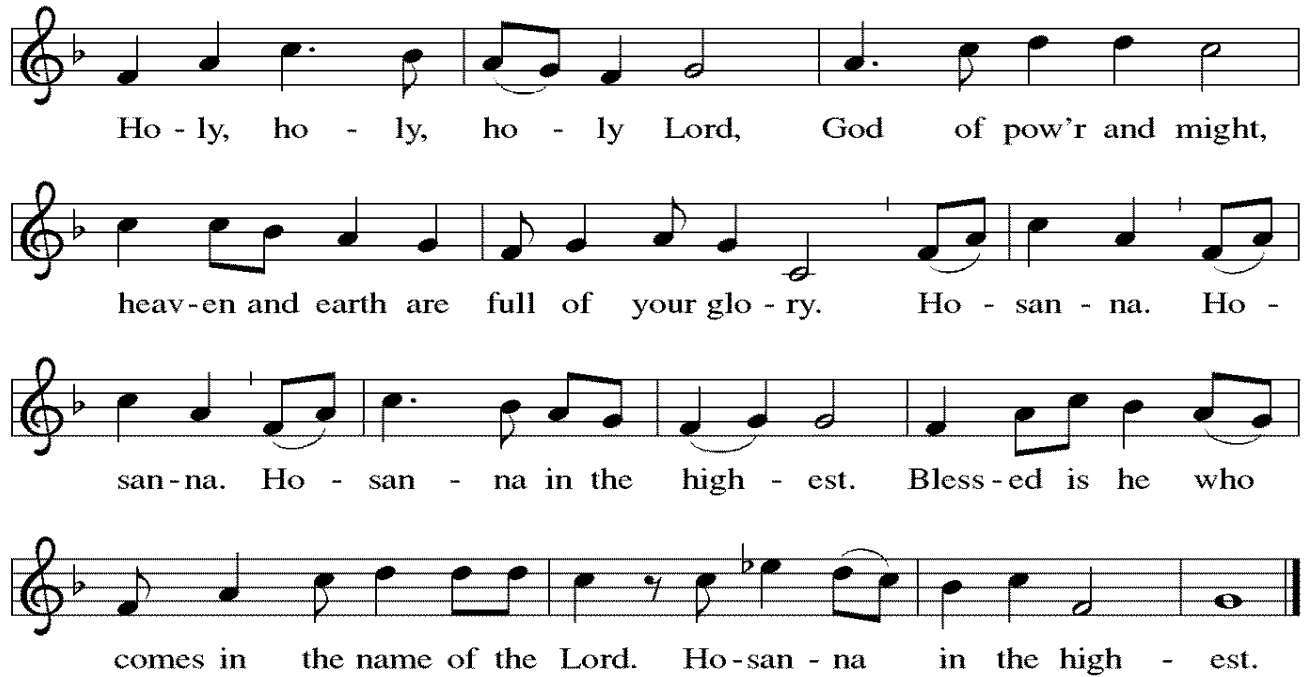
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

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



Thanksgiving at the Table

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

You are indeed holy, almighty and merciful God.
You are most holy,
and great is the majesty of your glory.

You so loved the world that you gave your only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him may not perish
but have eternal life.

We give you thanks for his coming into the world
to fulfill for us your holy will
and to accomplish all things for our salvation.

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.

Remembering, therefore, his salutary command,
his life-giving passion and death, his glorious resurrection and
ascension,

and the promise of his coming again,
we give thanks to you, O Lord God Almighty,
not as we ought but as we are able;
we ask you mercifully to accept our praise and thanksgiving
and with your Word and Holy Spirit to bless us, your servants,
and these your own gifts of bread and wine,
so that we and all who share in the body and blood of Christ
may be filled with heavenly blessing and grace,
and, receiving the forgiveness of sin,
may be formed to live as your holy people
and be given our inheritance with all your saints.

To you, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory in your holy church, now and forever.

Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.**

The presiding minister may address the assembly in these or similar words.

The gifts of God for the people of God. Come to the banquet for all is now ready.

COMMUNION

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 empty 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.

God of abundance, with this bread of life and cup of salvation you have united us with Christ, making us one with all your people. Now send us forth in the power of your Spirit, that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world and continue forever in the risen life of Jesus Christ, our 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.**

**1 Blessed be the name, blessed be the name,
blessed be the name, Jesus' name.
Blessed be the name, blessed be the name,
blessed be the name, Jesus' name.
Believe! Alleluia, alleluia.
Blessed be the name, Jesus' name.
Believe! Alleluia, alleluia.
Blessed be the name, Jesus' name.**

**2 Let us go to Jesus, let us go to Jesus,
let us go to Jesus in heav'n.
Let us go to Jesus, let us go to Jesus,
let us go to Jesus in heav'n.
Believe! Alleluia, alleluia.
Let us go to Jesus in heav'n.
Believe! Alleluia, alleluia.
Let us go to Jesus in heav'n.**

Dismissal

**Go in peace. Share the good news.
Thanks be to God.**

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BLESSED TO BLESS

SERVING TODAY:

ACOLYTE is Molly Boggs.

LECTORS are Mark Barnhart and Sunshine Keiser.

WORSHIP ASSISTANT is Rebecca Brunetta.

SEPTEMBER ALTAR GUILD: Roberta Laciak and Joan Orr.

SEPTEMBER 8:15 USHERS: Sue Boggs, Liz Rowe, Bill Pfeifer, and Brian Erdman.

*“But my God shall supply all your
needs according to his riches in
glory by Jesus Christ.”*

Philippians 4:19

PRAYER CONCERNS:

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER this week Brandie, Suzy, Lois, Terry, Joyce, Cullen, Doug, Gavin, Felicia, Kacie, Duane, Dennis, Jeff, Jan, Dylan, Judy, Stephen, Connie, Kim, Babs, Vinnie, Betty, Pat, Bruce, Cindy, Vivian, Jay, Paula and Christina.

THE ALTAR FLOWERS are given in memory Edward Watts by his family.

THE CHANCEL FLOWERS are given in memory of Irene A. Skodak by her daughter, Marla DeCrisio.

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.

MISSION STATEMENT

**“As Servants of Jesus Christ, we strive to impact
our families, neighbors and the world by sharing
our faith,
empowered by God's Grace”**

**Developed by Church Council
October 2016**

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

Today's prelude and offertory selections are both "walking" songs with settings by Paul Manz and Dale Wood.

RALLY DAY today. We will kick off another year of Christian learning and mission today. 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.



Cookies For First Responders!

Sunday September 10th Rally Day

We will deliver cookies to First Responders
after Church today.

Our Thanks for your help!

The Christian Outreach Committee

INVITATION You, your family, and friends are invited to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, West Point for a potluck dinner Monday Sept. 11th at 6:00 PM. We will have a special speaker from the Westmoreland Historical Society in honor of the 250th anniversary of Westmoreland County. She may speak about the history of Hannastown and other significant places and occurrences from our local history. Beverages and dessert will be provided but we are asking you to please bring a meat, starch, salad or vegetable to share. All are welcome. We just ask that you please RSVP so we can plan how many tables and chairs to set up. RSVP by Sunday the 10th by 5pm to Lillian Shea by calling or texting her at 412-290-1573 Hope to see you soon!

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION / YOUTH Tuesday, 6:30 PM.

CHORAL SOCIETY Tuesday, 7:00 PM.

HANDBELLS Thursday, 6:15 PM – 7:00 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).

CHOIR REHEARSALS begin Sunday, September 17 at 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.

NOISY OFFERING last Sunday was \$62.75.

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE last Sunday morning was 77.

PRAISE & THANKSGIVING (Celebrate together in song) at the SWPA – Women of the ELCA Fall Cluster Meeting October 7, 2023 at First beginning at 9 AM. Lunch served at Noon. Registration forms are available in the church office. Registration deadline is Wednesday, October 4, 2023.

CREATION CARE CORNER

From the Church in Society Committee – SWPA Synod

This was adapted from a posting by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2017. This year's theme is Let Justice and Peace Flow. More information is available from seasonofcreation.org.

THE SEASON OF CREATION, an ecumenical focus, begins on Friday, Sept. 1 (World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation) and extends through Wednesday, October 4 (Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi). It offers individual believers and communities a fitting opportunity to reaffirm their personal vocation to be stewards of creation, to thank God for the wonderful handiwork he has entrusted to our care, and to implore his help for the protection of creation as well as his pardon for the sins committed against the world in which we live. Suggestions on ways to live out these three dimensions follow.

1. Reaffirm our call as stewards of creation

- Individuals & families - Counteract our “throwaway culture”. Identify ways in which you can choose reusables, rather than disposables, such as coffee mugs, reusable bags, or cloth napkins and commit to making one additional change a week. These 5 weeks can change 5 habits!
- Church/community - Pray that we will contemplate the connections between all creatures under God our creator.

2. Thank God for his wonderful handiwork

- Individuals & family - meal time prayer might include thanks for the life-giving food that sustains and nourishes us. This moment of blessing reminds us of our dependence on God for life. Consider how all nourishment comes from the earth. Give thanks for all the human hands that helped bring this food to your table.
- Church/community - celebrate the Eucharist, a word which means “thanksgiving”. Prayer of thanks to God for his love for us and all creation.

3. Implore God’s help and ask his pardon

- Individuals & family- Ecological Confession: examine your own conscience, recognizing your sins against creation by actions and inactions. Bring these to confession. Choose to perform “a spiritual work of mercy for our common home”. This can be simple or elaborate – filling the bird feeder, helping cleanup litter along a highway, pulling weeds, planting a tree.
- Church/community - during this beautiful autumn season, plan an outdoor service, sing hymns of praise for creation, help with a cleanup day, hold a blessing of the animals.

LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE

Hurricane Idalia, the first major hurricane to make landfall in the United States this year, brought life-threatening storm surge, flooding and winds to the Big Bend region of Florida, Georgia and the Carolinas. Idalia is just the latest disaster to impact our neighbors in the United States and around the world.

Through Lutheran Disaster Response we are prepared to serve our neighbors impacted by Hurricane Idalia even as we continue to accompany partners in Maui after the wildfires and help those experiencing other disasters. We know that recovery often takes years, and through Lutheran Disaster Response we will be working with our partners for as long as needed. In moments such as this one, a gift to Lutheran Disaster Response provides crucial support where it's needed most.

If you would like to help, here's 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 **“Maui Wildfires”** or **“Hurricane Idalia”** 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 or hurricane.