

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 FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

September 3, 2023
8:15 AM & 10:00 AM

THE WORSHIP SERVICE

The beginning of the organ prelude is a call to silent, personal preparation for the worship of God.

GATHERING

Prelude **I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light**
(Setting, Mark Sedio)

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.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God,
who forgives all our sin,
whose mercy endures forever. **Amen.**

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

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 of one another.

The assembly kneels or stands. 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.

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.**

HYMN “Jesus, Still Lead On”

#624

- 1 Jesus, still lead on,
till our rest be won;
and, although the way be cheerless,
we will follow, calm and fearless;
guide us by your hand
to the promised land.**
- 2 If the way be drear,
if the foe be near,
let no faithless fears o'ertake us,
let not faith and hope forsake us;
safely past the foe
to our home we go.**

**3 When we seek relief
from a long-felt grief,
when temptations come alluring
make us patient and enduring;
show us that bright shore
where we weep no more.**

**4 Jesus, still lead on,
till our rest be won;
heav'nly leader, still direct us,
still support, console, protect us,
till we safely stand
in the promised land.**

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 God, we thank you for your Son, who chose the path of suffering for the sake of the world. Humble us by his example, point us to the path of obedience, and give us strength to follow your commands, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

The assembly is seated.

WORD

First Reading

Jeremiah 15:15-21

¹⁵O LORD, you know;
remember me and visit me,
and bring down retribution for me on my persecutors.
In your forbearance do not take me away;
know that on your account I suffer insult.

¹⁶Your words were found, and I ate them,
and your words became to me a joy
and the delight of my heart;
for I am called by your name,
O LORD, God of hosts.

¹⁷I did not sit in the company of merrymakers,
nor did I rejoice;
under the weight of your hand I sat alone,
for you had filled me with indignation.

¹⁸Why is my pain unceasing,
my wound incurable,
refusing to be healed?
Truly, you are to me like a deceitful brook,
like waters that fail.

¹⁹Therefore thus says the LORD:
If you turn back, I will take you back,
and you shall stand before me.
If you utter what is precious, and not what is worthless,
you shall serve as my mouth.
It is they who will turn to you,
not you who will turn to them.

²⁰And I will make you to this people
a fortified wall of bronze;
they will fight against you,
but they shall not prevail over you,
for I am with you
to save you and deliver you,

says the LORD.

²¹I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked,
and redeem you from the grasp of the ruthless.

The Word of the Lord.

R/Thanks be to God!

Psalm 26:1-8

¹Give judgment for me, O LORD, for I have lived [|] with integrity;
I have trusted in the LORD and [|] have not faltered.

²**Test me, O [|] LORD, and try me;
examine my heart [|] and my mind.**

³For your steadfast love is be- [|] fore my eyes;
I have walked faithful- [|] ly with you.

⁴**I have not sat [|] with the worthless,
nor do I consort with [|] the deceitful.**

⁵I have hated the company of [|] evildoers;
I will not sit down [|] with the wicked.

⁶**I will wash my hands in inno- [|] cence, O LORD,
that I may go in procession [|] round your altar,**

⁷singing aloud a song [|] of thanksgiving
and recounting all your won- [|] derful deeds.

⁸**LORD, I love the house in [|] which you dwell
and the place where your glo- [|] ry abides.**

Second Reading

Romans 12:9-21

⁹Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; ¹⁰love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹²Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. ¹³Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. ¹⁷Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. ¹⁸If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” ²⁰No, “if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.” ²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

The Word of the Lord.

R/Thanks be to God!

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia.* May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ enlighten the eyes of our hearts, so that we may know the hope to which God has called us. *Alleluia.

Gospel

Matthew 16:21-28

P: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

R/ Glory to you, O Lord.

²¹From that time on, [after Peter confessed that Jesus was the Messiah,] Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. ²²And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.” ²³But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

²⁴Then Jesus told his disciples, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. ²⁶For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?

²⁷“For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. ²⁸Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

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

Youth Sermon (10 AM)

Sermon

HYMN “Will You Come and Follow Me” #798

**1 "Will you come and follow me
if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know
and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown,
will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown
in you and you in me?**

**2 "Will you leave yourself behind
if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind
and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare,
should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer pray'r
in you and you in me?**

**3 "Will you let the blinded see
if I but call your name?
Will you set the pris'ners free
and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean,
and do such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean
in you and you in me?"**

**4 "Will you love the you you hide
if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside
and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found
to reshape the world around,
through my sight and touch and sound
in you and you in me?"**

**5 Lord, your summons echoes true
when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you
and never be the same.
In your company I'll go
where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow
in you and you in me.**

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 **I Was There to Hear Your Borne Cry**
(Setting, Mark Sedio)

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)

Let us pray.

God of all creation, all you have made is good, and your love endures forever. You bring forth bread from the earth and fruit from the vine. Nourish us with these gifts, that we might be for the world signs of your gracious presence in 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.

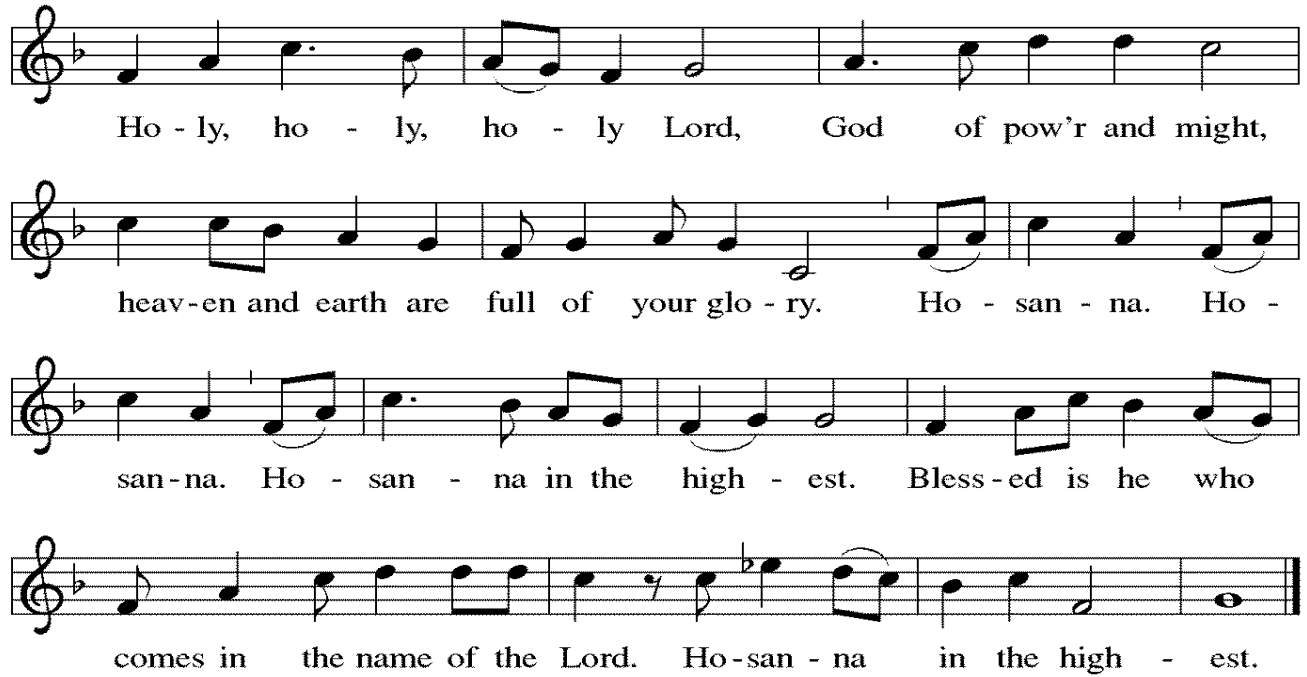
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

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.**

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

The gifts of God for the people of God. Taste and see that the Lord is good.

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.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✝ give you peace. **Amen.**

HYMN

“For the Beauty of the Earth”

#879

**1 For the beauty of the earth,
for the beauty of the skies,
for the love which from our birth
over and around us lies:**

Refrain

**Christ, our God, to thee we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.**

**2 For the wonder of each hour
of the day and of the night,
hill and vale and tree and flow'r,
sun and moon and stars of light: *Refrain***

**3 For the joy of ear and eye,
for the heart and mind's delight,
for the mystic harmony
linking sense to sound and sight: *Refrain***

**4 For the joy of human love,
brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth and friends above;
for all gentle thoughts and mild: *Refrain***

**5 For each perfect gift of thine,
peace on earth and joy in heav'n;
for thyself, best gift divine,
to our world so freely giv'n: *Refrain***

Refrain

**Christ, our God, to thee we raise
this our sacrifice of 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 Addy Saraceni.

LECTORS are David von Schlichten and Shirley Huls.

WORSHIP ASSISTANT is Carolyn Hanzel.

SEPTEMBER ALTAR GUILD: Roberta Laciak and Joan Orr.

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

PRAYER CONCERNS:

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER this week Brandie, Suzy, Lois, Terry, Joyce, Cullen, Doug, Gavin, Felicia, Kacie, Duane, Shirley, Dennis, Teresa, Lil, Jeff, Jan, Dylan, Judy, Stephen, Connie, Lisa, Jaina, Kim, Babs, Vinnie, Betty, Pat and Bruce.

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.

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

Philippians 4:19

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

NOISY OFFERING TODAY will be donated to the Little Free Food Truck which is sponsored by Aliquippa, PA's House of Prayer Lutheran Church. This program began with a weekly sit-down meal which has grown to meet the needs of approximately 80 people each week. As the program developed, it became clear that many of the guests found traveling to dine at House of Prayer's facility challenging. House of Prayer pondered the problem and came up with the idea of "The Little Free Food Truck" where they take the food to those in need. The Synod pitched in with help from the Ethel Versey Grant to Synod. This grant stipulates that it was given to provide care for programs that help needy people.

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!

CHURCH OFFICE will be closed Labor Day, September 4, 2023.

COUNCIL Tuesday, 6:00 PM.

CHORAL SOCIETY Tuesday, 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).

FELLOWSHIP Wednesday, 6:30 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 87.

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.

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**

LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE

The significant loss of life and damage caused by the wildfires in Hawaii have turned our prayers and attention to mourning those lost, supporting the survivors and how Lutheran Disaster Response can assist with recovery.

Exacerbated by strong winds, wildfires on Maui have claimed dozens of lives and have destroyed homes, businesses and lines of communication. The Big Island of Hawaii has also been impacted by wildfires, and more islands remain vulnerable to additional fires this season.

Lutheran Disaster Response is prepared to accompany our neighbors in Hawaii impacted by these wildfires. Will you consider a gift today?

Lutheran Disaster Response is coordinating with the Pacifica Synod and other partners to assess the needs of people impacted by the wildfires. We will work with them to provide for immediate needs and long-term recovery amid the widespread destruction. Lutheran Disaster Response is committed to accompanying recovering communities in the years ahead.

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**” 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.



RALLY DAY PLANNED FOR SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

On September 10, 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:

Chicken Salad Croissant Sandwiches

Hot Dogs on buns for the kids!

Pickles Chips Cookies

Punch / 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 3, 2023**.

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.