

FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
246 South Main Street  
Greensburg, Pennsylvania 15601-3183  
T: 724-834-1457  
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felchurch.org

PASTOR.....Chris Combs  
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC.....Marvin Huls  
CHURCH TREASURER..... Patti Sias  
OFFICE MANAGER.....Patricia Pluck  
OFFICE SECRETARY.....Gretchen Fischer  
CUSTODIAN..... Jaison Smith

**CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS**

Rebecca Brunetta                      President  
Brian Erdman  
Tom Flory  
Linda Griffith  
Charlie Kaylor  
Dan Krack  
Bobbie Laciak                      Vice President  
Leon (Bud) Nusselt  
Holly Rowe  
Cullen Shuster  
Megan Zobb                              Secretary

**WORSHIP WITH US**

Sunday Church School                      9:30 A.M.  
SCS does not meet in June, July or August

Sunday Worship    8:15 A.M. & 10:45 A.M.  
Summer Schedule 8:15 A.M. & 10:00 A.M.

Elevator and Hearing Assistance Available

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED  
FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
246 SOUTH MAIN STREET  
GREENSBURG, PA 15601-3183

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**FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
GREENSBURG, PA**



PHONE 724-834-1457  
FAX 724-834-1469

office@felchurch.org

**December 2023**

Pastor's Note

*<sup>9</sup>The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. <sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. <sup>16</sup>From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.*

*(John 1:9,14,16, NRSV)*

Dear Friends in Christ,

Light seems to be on my mind recently. Maybe that passage from 1 Thessalonians is still ringing in my mind from yesterday's sermon. There Paul reminded the Thessalonians something that we also need to be reminded of over and over, that we are children of the light. It could also be that light is on my mind as I write this note to you because lights were being replaced in the conference room here this morning. Whatever the reason that light is on my mind these days, during Advent, it is the true light for which we wait expectantly.

This time of year can be overwhelming for many of us. Schedules are full and there is a lot to be done, especially with all the commercialization of the "Christmas Season." So, in those moments where you might feel overwhelmed, I invite you to remember that, "The true light, which enlightens everyone," is coming.

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We anticipate the light of Christ which entered into the world as the Word became flesh, living among us and changing everything, forever. In this season of Advent we remember the anticipated arrival of the Messiah and we anticipate His return. All the while remembering that through Jesus we have received grace upon grace.

Blessings to you all in this season of expectant waiting and I wish you all a Merry and Blessed Christmas. I hope to see you all on Christmas Eve as we welcome once again the true light of the world.

Together in Christ,

Pastor Chris



**A CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM will be held  
December 17  
at the 10:45 AM service**

Installation of Council Members will be held December 17 at the end of the first service and the beginning of the second service.

## FIRLU HAS HEARD...



-that as of October 25th, our offering receipts were \$145,734. Last year they were \$147,084.

-that **Noisy Offering** will be collected the first Sunday of December to benefit Lutheran Disaster Relief.

-that assistance is greatly needed on Thursday, **December 14** at 8:00 AM to unload the truck and sort groceries for Food Pantry.

-that 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. Thanks!

-that the deadline for the December newsletter is Monday, December 18. Please be prompt. You may submit your articles to [office@felchurch.org](mailto:office@felchurch.org).

-that the ELCA wants to know what it is to be the church God is calling us to be. But we need **YOU**. Join us as we seek to discern God's Spirit and work to become the church God is calling us to be. This is Future Church; This is God's Love Made Real. Please take some time to go to <https://lovemadereal.elca.org> to watch a few videos and take a 15 minute survey. Thank you.

See you at worship,  
FIRLU

# Serving At Worship In December 2023



## CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

### CHRISTMAS EVE, December 24

**9:30 AM Fourth Sunday of Advent.**

**7:00 PM Candlelight Communion Service.**

**December 31 Only one service at 9:30 AM.**

## ANGEL TREE 2023



It is that time of the year to donate for the Angel Tree!

We will be accepting gift cards for the children of our Food Bank families. Angels will be available the first Sunday of Advent, December 3.

Donations of \$25 dollar gift cards for Target or Walmart will be accepted until **Monday, December 11, 2023.**

Our Sunday School students will be making the Angels again this year.

Please choose an angel from the Christmas Tree and attach the gift card to the angel and place it in the offering plate or bring to the church office. If you would like to keep the angel, place the gift card in an envelope, write "ANGEL TREE" on the outside of the envelope and place it in the offering plates or drop off in the church office. Thank you!

12/3	12/10	12/17	12/24	12/31
<b><u>ACOLYTES</u></b>				
Aaron Woodley	Noah Boggs	Molly Boggs	9:30 AM Addy Saraceni	9:30 AM Corrina Vuick
Tessa Miller	Benjamin Gustafson	Nicholas Vuick	7:00 PM Aaron Woodley	
<b><u>LECTORS</u></b>				
Mark Barnhart	Sue Boggs	Bob Errett	9:30 AM Jean Miller	9:30 AM Lessons and Carols
Dan Krack	Joan Orr	Malcolm Sias	7 PM Rebecca Brunetta	
<b><u>ASSISTING MINISTERS</u></b>				
Carolyn Hanzel	Rebecca Brunetta	Dianna Marusko	Rebecca Brunetta	Carolyn Hanzel

### ALTAR GUILD

Dianna Marusko  
Gwen Irwin  
Babs Pascarella



# THE TEN COMMANDMENTS



We hope that you will be able to join in the discussion. We will have two opportunities to meet and hopefully one will fit into your schedule. The material will be the same for each session.

You can join the discussion at either 1:30pm or 6:00pm  
The next date is Monday, December 18.

*"How excellent is thy loving kindness,  
O God. Therefore the children of men put  
their trust under the shadow of thy wings."  
Psalm 36:7*

You are invited to attend **FIRST THURSDAY WORSHIP & LUNCHEON** at ZION'S LUTHERAN CHURCH Thursday, December 7, 2023. Service begins at 12:05 PM and lunch is served following service at 12:30 PM. Suggested lunch donation—\$5.00.

## Online Giving



Did you know that you can make donations to First Lutheran with an electronic payment option that lets you securely and conveniently make donations/offerings online?

### Through your Bank:

To set up payments, go to your bank's website (Citizens Bank was used for this example) and look for the "Pay Bills" tab. Click on this tab and then "Add Company". Then click on Charities, then other and enter First Lutheran Church, address and phone number. If you need to enter an account number, use "offering" or "donation", or follow the instructions on your banks website.

Once this is set up, you can give any time, can set up automatic giving, and even put a note as to where you want the donation to go (i.e. flowers, memorials, etc.). The bank then sends a check to the church from your account. So simple!

### Tithe.ly

We are currently finalizing our online giving option through Tithe.ly. We expect to have this giving option available beginning in Advent. Details will be included in upcoming bulletins and on the website, [www.felchurch.org](http://www.felchurch.org).

This option will allow giving through a variety of means. In addition to adding an option for our regular supporters, this will also provide a convenient method to support the ministries of First for those who might be visiting or who don't typically utilize cash or checks.

We have found that many people give faithfully every time they are at worship at First Lutheran and we are thankful for your generosity. Utilizing one of these online options also provides an opportunity to make sure your support continues if you are away.

## Because of God's Great Mercy

"...in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

- 1 Peter 2:9

God has made us God's own people "in order that" we might proclaim through word and deed all that God has done in our lives. We do that individually as we live our faith in our daily lives. We also do that collectively in our congregation.

Our congregation proclaims God's mighty acts within our walls through worship, through Christian education for our children and youth, through the many groups that meet to learn and serve. Our congregation proclaims God's mighty acts in our community as we make a difference for good in the lives of people around us who are in need. Our congregation proclaims God's mighty acts across our country and around the world as we support important ministries that are making a difference near and far.

Your giving to our congregation makes all of this possible. Because of you, we "proclaim the mighty acts of him" who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

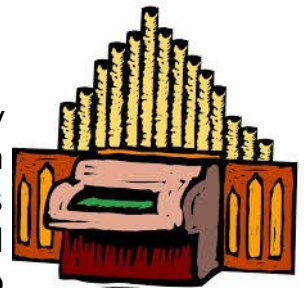
**ALTAR FLOWERS** are needed for January 7 and February 11, 2024. Cost is \$50.00. Please contact the church office if you would like to provide the altar flowers for either of these dates in memory or honor of someone.

## MATCHING GIFT PROGRAM 2023

First Lutheran has sponsored a Matching Gifts program since 2002. Members of First Lutheran are invited to make a gift to any non-profit, human service organization whose mission is in accordance with First Lutheran's mission, as agreed upon by our Community Outreach Committee. Write your check out to First Evangelical Lutheran Church and mark "Matching Funds" on the memo line on the bottom left corner of the check. Next to "Matching Funds" write the name of the organization(s) to whom you wish to donate matching funds (Example: Matching Funds...Westmoreland Food Bank). Such gifts will be matched by a First Lutheran Check and will be sent to the organization. Also, such gifts can be made throughout the year until the total budgeted amount of \$10,000.00 is met. More details regarding the Matching Gift Program are available from the office.

### From the Organ Bench....No Plan B

Pastor Dennis DiMauro writes, "I have had many conversations about the demise of Western Christianity and the difficulty of growing churches these days. But Jesus told us to make disciples and baptize. He didn't say, "Hey, let's all go underground like some eclectic punk band," as if the gospel were for just a few dogged fans rather than the salvation of the whole world. To quote St. Paul (channeling Lynn Anderson), 'I beg your pardon. I never promised you a rose garden. You might get flogged or even put to death!' The people of this world really aren't into us, but those same people desperately need Jesus! We all get frustrated and I've had many a crushing and frustrating day in my ministry. But Jesus and the apostles never gave us a Plan B. We need to keep reaching out to our communities, building relationships, and sharing the gospel whenever we can. And if that doesn't grow our congregations, so be it. We can then in good conscience hand it all over to Jesus, trust in his sovereign plan, resting in the fact that we have been good and faithful servants of the gospel of Jesus Christ."



## POINSETTIAS



Poinsettias will again decorate our church on Christmas Eve. You are invited to purchase a plant at a cost of **\$10.00** and “lend” it to the parish. Plants that are purchased may be removed from the church following the 7:00 PM Christmas Eve Candlelight Service.

Your purchase may be made “in memory of” or “in honor of” the person(s) of your choosing. Please indicate your preference and return this form with your payment. We must have your order by **Monday, December 18.**

\*\*\*\*\*

### POINSETTIA ORDER FORM:

*In honor of* \_\_\_\_\_

*By* \_\_\_\_\_

*And/or*

*In Memory of* \_\_\_\_\_

*By* \_\_\_\_\_

*Amount enclosed \$* \_\_\_\_\_

## OPERATION REINDEER GIFT SUGGESTIONS continued:

### Miscellaneous

- Craft kits, puzzle books,
- CDs/DVDs Games, activity books, handheld games,
- CDs/DVDs, Batteries (especially AA),
- Wallets, watches Portable CD players, radios,
- Sports memorabilia (especially Pittsburgh teams),
- Writing paper, stationary items especially with stamps,
- Diabetic or sugarless items,
- Gently used luggage.

### LOOKING FOR A WAY TO SERVE AT FIRST?

We are in need of volunteers to serve as lectors, particularly at the 8:15 service. We are also in need of Worship Assistants and members to serve on Altar Guild. Please consider if this is a way you can use your gifts at First. If you have any questions about what is involved, please get in touch with Pastor Chris.

### NOISY OFFERING FOR DECEMBER

#### Lutheran Disaster Relief

For December’s Noisy Offering, we will be collecting for Lutheran Disaster Relief.



*First Lutheran will again participate in Operation Reindeer. Your gifts should be new, unboxed and unwrapped. Please bring them to the church office by Monday, December 4. Thank you!*

### OPERATION REINDEER GIFT SUGGESTIONS

*Operation Reindeer is Mental Health of America's annual drive to provide Christmas gifts for Westmoreland County residents at Torrance State Hospital, a long term facility for psychiatric patients. These items make being away from family at Christmastime easier for patients who struggle with mental illnesses.*

**Please, no items with glass, belts, razors or other safety hazards!**

## Clothing

**New Men's size XL or larger Women's size L or larger  
(XXL and larger and 1X and larger sizes are greatly needed)**

**Sweat shirts & pants, tops, tee shirts, pants or jeans**

**Bathrobes (no belts), jackets, coats, outerwear,**

**Socks, mittens, gloves, hats, ear muffs**

**Sweaters, undergarments, pajamas**

## Toiletries

**Shampoo/conditioner, soap, body wash,**

**Brushes, pony tail holders,**

**Hand/body lotion, shaving gel/creams,**

**Lipstick, gloss, powder, eye shadow, mascara, lip balm, blush.**

## HELP US DECORATE OUR

## “NATIVE AMERICAN CHRISTMAS TREE”

Native American children need our help this Christmas. The Northern Cheyenne and Crow Reservation in Montana is in desperate need of warm clothing for their children. Every winter, Native Americans face weather conditions that could lead to hypothermia. Fifty nine percent of homes are substandard: lacking water, electricity, insulation, or a sewage system.



This year our “Christmas Tree” will be transformed into a “Native American Christmas Tree” Please help us decorate the “Native American Christmas Tree” by purchasing new children's & youth's hats, scarves and mittens. Susan from Saint Labre Indian School stated they have 400 students from infants to high school students who are in need. You may place your purchases on the tree, under the tree or bring them to the church office.

On December 17, we will gather all of our blessed hats, scarves, gloves and mittens and mail them to Susan (who is in charge of Donor Relations) in Ashland, Montana. She will distribute our winter wear to the children of the Northern Cheyenne and Crow Reservation.



The Ruth Circle will meet Thursday, December 14 at 7:00 PM in the parlor for an evening of fellowship. On the agenda is a business meeting, a program and a delicious dessert. All church women are invited and welcomed.

# December 2023

Please note that this schedule of events is subject to change.

Nothing is scheduled for December 1 and 2.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>3</b> 8:15 Worship 9:30 SCS 10:00 Choir 10:45 Worship NOISY Offering Fellowship Bkfst.	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>  6:00 Council	<b>6</b> FOOD/HEART Noon	<b>7</b>  6:15 Handbells	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>10</b> 8:15 Worship 9:30 SCS 10:00 Choir 10:45 Worship JAVA Table	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>  6:30 Ch. Ed./Youth	<b>13</b> FOOD/HEART Noon	<b>14</b> FOOD PANTRY 6:15 Handbells 7:00 Ruth Circle	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> 8:15 Worship 9:30 SCS 10:00 Choir 10:45 Worship Children's Program Council Installation	<b>18</b> JAN. NEWSLETTER DEADLINE 1:30 & 6:00 Ten Commandments	<b>19</b>  6:30 Finance	<b>20</b> FOOD/HEART Noon	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b>  9:30 AM Worship  7:00 PM Christmas Eve	<b>25</b> OFFICE CLOSED  	<b>26</b>  6:00 Executive	<b>27</b> FOOD/HEART Noon  6:30 PM Property	<b>28</b> NEWSLETTER FOLDING	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> 9:30 AM Lessons & Carols						

## OFFERING ENVELOPES AVAILABLE SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10

### Offering Envelopes



2024 offering envelopes will be available in the Narthex beginning Sunday, December 10. You are asked to pick up your envelopes before or after worship, or anytime during the week. Please deliver a box to a shut-in, family member, or neighbor who may not be able to take their box.

Please **DO NOT** use 2024 envelopes before January first as your envelope number may have changed. Offerings received in the church office or postmarked on or before December 31st will be credited as gifts for 2023.