

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

Kip Boggs
Rebecca Brunetta Vice President
Tom Flory
Linda Griffith
Charlie Kaylor
Dan Krack Secretary
Bobbie Laciak
Leon (Bud) Nusselt
Cheryl Pfeifer
Holly Rowe President
Cullen Shuster

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 9:30 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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GREENSBURG, PA 15601
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**FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
GREENSBURG, PA**



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

office@felchurch.org

January 2025

Pastor's Note

Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a new way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. Isaiah 43:18-19 (NRSV)

Dear Friends in Christ,

As we enter into January, many thoughts and conversations will focus on the “new” year. What will be different this year? What will my resolution be this year and will I be able to keep with it throughout the year? These questions and a variety of others tend to come up each year.

In the church, our new year began on December 1st, the First Sunday of Advent. We began our season of expectant waiting for Christmas and the birth of Jesus. As we gathered in December, we kept that expectation before our gatherings and then celebrated the baby Jesus, God in the flesh entering our world.

As we read from the Prophet Isaiah, we do so with Christ in view. We recognize that incarnation is a new thing that God has done. Christ is a new way in the wilderness of life.

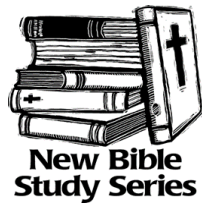
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This year as we begin a new calendar year, may we all remember the new thing that God has done. Sending Christ into our midst so that we may live eternally and have life abundantly here and now. As we keep an eye on the things this new year brings, may we also keep an eye for what new thing God might be up to. In our individual lives, as well as in our families, our congregations, our communities, and throughout the world.

Blessings to you all in this new year and may you also recognize how God is at work through you to bring about something new.

Together in Christ,
Pastor Chris



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 January 27 (Hidden Treasure, Pearl, and Net). Hope to see you there! Future Bible Studies will be February 24, March 31, April 28, and May 19.



FIRLU HAS HEARD...

- that as of November 24th, our general offering receipts were \$169,827. Last year they were \$171,132.
- that our Stewardship Campaign resulted in 38 commitments totaling \$96,164. Thanks to all who made their commitment.
- that **Noisy Offering** will be collected the first Sunday of January to benefit Union Mission.
- 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 Food Bank distribution is **Thursday, January 16**. Assistance is needed around 7:30 AM to help with the set-up and the need for assistance increases at 8:00 AM to unload the truck and prepare for distribution. If you can lend a hand on Thursday morning, January 16, your effort will be greatly appreciated.
- that there is **NO Food from the Heart January 1**.
- that the deadline for the **February newsletter is Monday, January 20**. Please be prompt. You may submit your articles to office@felchurch.org.
- that the church office will be closed January 1.

See you at worship,
FIRLU

Financial Update Through November 2024		
Giving		
2024	2023	Budget
\$ 193,091	\$ 194,259	\$ 215,416
Expense		
2024	2023	Budget
\$ 364,401	\$ 345,694	\$ 413,095

Serving At Worship In January 2025

1/5

1/12

1/19

1/26

LECTORS

Kevin Reilly
Joan Orr

Bill Pfeifer
Megan Zobb

Mark Barnhart
Tawnya Combs

Sue Boggs
Jeanne
Christensen

ASSISTING MINISTERS

Dianna Marusko

Rebecca Brunetta

Carolyn Hanzel
Tawnya Combs

Dianna Marusko

ALTAR GUILD

Bev Attenberger
Sue Ross



PLEASE NOTE: The security system has been upgraded. If you have previously accessed the building and armed/disarmed the system, please make sure that you have an access code. Please reach out to Pr. Chris if you have not already received a code. **The old code is no longer active.**

Offering Envelopes



2025 OFFERING ENVELOPES have arrived! The boxes are in the Narthex. 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. **NOTE:** Your envelope number may have changed - **DO NOT** use 2024 envelopes now. Please only use 2025 envelopes.

“God is light and in him there is no darkness at all.”

John 1:5

I will Follow God like Ruth



RUTH CIRCLE will meet Thursday, January 9 at 7:00 PM in the church parlor. All women of the congregation are invited to join in evening of fellowship.

NOISY OFFERING FOR JANUARY is UNION MISSION

The Union Mission is a faith-based organization providing resources that lead to safe, affordable, and sustained housing.

Lives are forever changed when neighbors, businesses, landlords, churches – the community at large – all rally to ensure that a person or family experiencing homelessness has the support, dignity, and compassion they need.

The Union Mission has been working to pull together community members and people experiencing homelessness or other housing insecurities in Westmoreland and surrounding counties for over 30 years. Starting by taking the first resident into Emergency Shelter in 1987, the Mission has evolved into providing a system of interventions to assist people transition to safe, affordable, and sustained housing.

FOOD from the HEART: Recently FFTH has found it difficult to keep our cupboards stocked with nonperishables. We are asking the congregation for small monthly donations in the early months of 2025 to assist us with this problem. There will be boxes available in the Fellowship Hall for donations in January, February, and March.

Here is our wish list:

January: a can of green beans, mixed vegetables, corn or carrots.

February: cans of fruit or jars of apple sauce.

March: broth, diced or crushed tomatoes or spaghetti sauce.

We appreciate your help!



Please thank your Congregation for their generous donations for the Westmoreland County Children’s Bureau.

Your donations of children’s socks, underwear and toys will fill the closet for 2025 that will help so many children in Westmoreland County and it will leave a lasting impact on their lives.

Also the Monetary donation will help.

Thank you again for all your support in Thrivent’s good work.

Wishing you and your Congregation a Blessed Christmas and New Year,

Samantha, Roy and Mary Nelson

MESSAGE FOR THRIVENT FINANCIAL MEMBERS

Thrivent members are given Thrivent Cash Dollars to direct to charitable organizations.

When you are considering where to spend your Cash Dollars, please consider giving your gift to the General Fund of First Lutheran Church. Thrivent Financial considers our congregation and any committee a valid recipient for Cash Dollars. Call (800-847-4836) say Thrivent Choice or email fraternal@thrivent.com .

“A Gift of Joy”

And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy” (Matthew 2:9b-10).

Did you know that stewardship can lead you to know true joy? For those who have been in the Church for any length of time, this might sound really surprising. But the Wise Men show us this joy.

The Wise Men did not know joy because of what they had done. They knew the joy of receiving the gift of God! The creation, through the star, had caused them to set out on a journey. It brought them to an unwitting and unwilling Herod. But what finally pointed them to their ultimate goal, the King of the Jews? It was the Word. The Word of God that the scribes had quoted to Herod proved to be true. They had found the palace of the king!

But it was no palace. It was a place. It was a simple home. The Lord had come to dwell among His people in the simplest of ways. Through stewardship of creation and Word, they were led to find this place. Pointed to the truth by the management of Word and world, the Wise Men found joy. This joy is more than a feeling. It is a person. The joy comes from meeting Jesus.

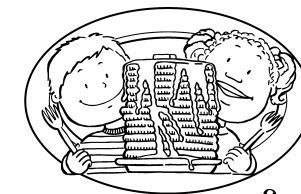
Your stewardship of God’s simple gifts is used by Him to guide others to Jesus. Most times that is your faithful financial support of our work together in the Church. Other times it is found in the simple acts of generosity that show the people around you that you have the joy of knowing Jesus. This takes money, time and a willingness to be in the Word and at the Lord’s Table. You can only steward the joy of God’s presence when you are present with Him. That is where you find the joy the Wise Men know. It is that joy, as steward, that you are called to give to others!

Yes, you too can be a steward of the Wise Men’s joy. The simple gift of God’s Word will show this to you. In the coming year, make it a priority to be in God’s house and at His Table weekly. Then you will know the contagious joy of being a steward of God’s simple gifts!

From LCMS Stewardship Ministry: “Simple Gifts: A series of devotions on stewardship”

Angel Tree Thank You

Thanks to the generosity of the congregation, we were able to provide 29 children in the food pantry program with gifts this Christmas.



SHROVETIDE BRUNCH

SUNDAY, March 2

The First Family will gather for a “Shrovetide Pancake Breakfast Brunch” the Sunday before Lent, March 2, following the 10:45 AM worship service.

The menu will include: pancakes, sausage, syrup, orange juice, coffee, and tea. Reservation forms will be included in the Sunday bulletin. A donation to defray expenses may be given if you so desire.

Shrovetide traditions of the past included using all of the flour in the house in preparation for the fasting of Lent. The days preceding Ash Wednesday became festive days with focus on increased baking, fellowship, and fun (as in the Mardi Gras tradition). We adapt this tradition with our pancake brunch for the First Lutheran family. Join us as we enjoy this time of food and fellowship.

ON STEWARDSHIP

What happens when my offering goes into the plate?

It makes a difference in the ministry of our congregation:

As I make an offering to the Lord in worship through my congregation,

It helps us to provide for pastoral leadership for our church.

It helps us to have available all that is necessary to have meaningful weekly worship.

It helps us to address the needs of our building – pay for utilities, maintenance and improvements.

it helps us to provide Christian education.

It helps us to share the gospel in our community in word and action though Food from the Heart, Food Bank, Holiday Parade, etc.

It makes fellowship events possible such as Rally Day, Apple Dumplings, Shrovetide, etc. that bring us together as Christian brothers and sisters.

It provides for the many different types of supplies we need to do our ministry – papers, pencils and pen, tape, ink, copying, kitchen supplies, etc.

It makes a difference in the ministry of our Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod:

A portion of my offering through our congregations giving to mission support also goes on to the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod. There:

It provides support for congregations as they go through the search for pastoral leadership. It provides counsel and guidance for congregations in times of conflict or crisis.

It provides resources for congregations in many areas of ministry – worship, Christian education, evangelism, social outreach, ecumenical relationships, stewardship, financial responsibility and record keeping.

It provides support to our camps – Lutherlyn and Agape.

The women of Ruth Circle would like to thank everyone who donated and made it possible for them to assemble 20 disaster buckets!



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Thanks to our Sunday School for a wonderful Christmas Program, reminding us all that Christ is the reason we celebrate.



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It provides support to Thiel College and the United Lutheran Seminary.

It provides support for the Lutheran Service Society, Lutheran SeniorLife, Bethesda Children's Home and Glade Run Lutheran services.

It supports our ecumenical work with Christian associates.

It supports Lutheran campus ministries in Downtown Pittsburgh and Oakland, PA.

It makes a difference in the ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

A portion of my offering also goes on through mission support to the ELCA. There:

It supports missionaries serving in more than 40 different countries around the world.

It supports additional ministry projects in over 80 countries

It supports the starting of new congregations across the United States.

It supports the renewal of congregations across the United States.

It supports the training of pastors through 7 ELCA seminaries and 26 ELCA colleges and universities.

It supports over 180 campus ministries.

It supports 145 camps and outdoor ministries.

It provides for resource people and other resources to strengthen the ministry of our congregations

It supports our work ecumenically with other church bodies.

By Pastor Blair Morgan (Sept 2010)

Updated for First Lutheran Greensburg by First's Stewardship Committee (Dec. 2024)

January 2025 *Please note that this schedule of events is subject to change.*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Office Closed	2	3	4
5 8:15 Worship 9:30 SCS 10:00 Choir 10:45 Worship NOISY OFFERING	6	7 6:00 Executive	8 FOOD/HEART Noon 6:30 Property	9 6:15 Handbells 7:00 Ruth Circle	10	11
12 8:15 Worship 9:30 SCS 10:00 Choir 10:45 Worship JAVA TABLE	13	14 6:00 Council	15 FOOD/HEART Noon 6:30 Ch. Outreach	16 FOOD BANK 6:15 Handbells	17	18
19 8:15 Worship 9:30 SCS 10:00 Choir 10:45 Worship	20 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	21 6:30 Finance	22 FOOD/HEART Noon	23 6:15 Handbells	24	25
26 8:15 Worship 9:30 SCS 10:00 Choir 10:45 Worship	27 1:30 & 6:00 Bible study	28 NEWSLETTER FOLDING 6:30 Ch. Ed/Youth	29 FOOD/HEART Noon 6:30 Property	30 6:15 Handbells	31	

CONGREGATION DINNER / MEETING February

Join the First Lutheran Family for business and fellowship on February 2nd immediately following the 10:45 AM service. **Lunch and fellowship will include a meal with meat, rolls, beverages, and dessert provided. You are asked to bring a covered dish of vegetables or salad and your own place settings.**



There will be printed copies available at the back of the church beginning January 19th and also when we gather for the annual meeting on February 2.