

FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
 246 South Main Street
 Greensburg, Pennsylvania 15601-3183
 T: 724-834-1457
 F: 724-834-1469
 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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 US POSTAGE PAID
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FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
 GREENSBURG, PA



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

office@felchurch.org

March 2025

Pastor's Note

*In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan, earth stood hard as iron,
 water like a stone; snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
 In the bleak midwinter, long ago.*

ELW # 294 - *In the Bleak Midwinter*, verse 1

Dear Friends in Christ,

This morning as I was walking back from Bible study and thinking about what I should write you this month, the hymn above came to mind. *In the Bleak Midwinter* is found among the Christmas hymns, but it seemed appropriate for where we find ourselves today, in the midst of a winter that seems to be un-ending. You might remember cold and snow were part of my note last month.

The lyrics of that first verse seem to fit our situation today, even if they were describing a “bleak midwinter, long ago.” However, it isn’t just the references to the cold and snow that seem appropriate. We don’t know what kind of weather we are in store for in March, but we do know that we will find ourselves in the midst of Lent.

Lenten practices vary from person to person, but it is often a time of introspection, self-sacrifice, and service. Lent is a time to prepare for Easter, reflecting on the sacrifice of Jesus, our Savior, as we prepare for the joy of the resurrection.

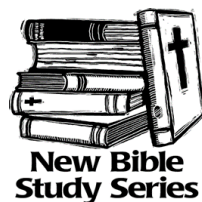
While the first verse of that beautiful hymn seems fitting for the weather we currently endure, it is the third verse that I find appropriate as we look to the journey before us in Lent. *(Continued on Page 2)*

(Continued from Page 1)

What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb; if I were a wiseman I would do my part; yet what I can give him --- give my heart.

Of course, we know that we can't do that on our own, but only with the help of the Holy Spirit. As we embark on the journey this lent, I pray that this season will be a time of renewal, drawing you closer to God. The one who sends Christ into the midst of our bleak midwinter, so that we can find peace, hope, and new life, in him.

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 March 31. Hope to see you there! Future Bible Studies will be April 28, and May 19.

The Bishop is coming!

We hope you can be here on March 9th. The Bishop will be joining us for the morning and proclaiming the Good News as we worship together on the 1st Sunday in Lent.



FIRLU HAS HEARD...

-that as of January 31st, our general offering receipts were \$12,314. Last year they were \$14,462.

--that **Noisy Offering** will be collected the first Sunday of March to benefit Lutheran Summer Music program.

-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, March 20**. 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, March 20, your effort will be greatly appreciated.

-that the deadline for the **April newsletter is Monday, March 17**. Please be prompt. You may submit your articles to office@felchurch.org.

-that **ALTAR FLOWERS** are needed for March 16. Contact the church office if you would like to provide altar flowers for this date. Cost is \$50.00.

See you at worship,
FIRLU

Financial Update Through January 2025		
Giving		
2025	2024	Budget
\$ 16,812	\$ 20,151	\$ 20,500
Expense		
2025	2024	Budget
\$ 29,763	\$ 25,464	\$ 38,937

Serving At Worship In March 2025

3/2 3/9 3/16 3/23 3/30

ACOLYTES

Colton Boggs	Nathaniel Boggs	Noah Boggs	Molly Boggs	Rachel Boggs
Owen Lenhart			Owen Lenhart	

LECTORS

Liz Rowe	Bill Pfeifer	Rebecca Brunetta	Mark Barnhart	Sue Boggs
Joan Orr	Malcolm Sias	Megan Zobb	Dan Krack	Jeanne Christensen

ASSISTING MINISTERS

Dianna Marusko	Rebecca Brunetta	Carolyn Hanzel	Dianna Marusko	Rebecca Brunetta
		Tawnya Combs		

ALTAR GUILD

Bev Attenberger
Linda Griffith



“I will put my law within them and write it on their heart, and I will be their God and they will be my people.”
Jeremiah 31:33

JOIN OUR MARCH FOR PARKS TEAM!



We are organizing a First Lutheran TEAM to participate in the MARCH FOR PARKS on Saturday, March 29. The event will take place at Twin Lakes Park in Greensburg at the Activity Center. The March for Parks has raised funds for the County Parks and Trails for the past 23 years. There will be a pig roast and BBQ sandwiches, raffles, live entertainment, family friendly activities, and a “march” around Twin Lakes Park. Make a \$30 donation online and receive an official March for Parks t-shirt at a discount (price increase for day-of registration). Kids can make a \$15 donation and receive a cool prize (price increase for day-of registration). Visit www.WestmorelandCountyPA.gov/MFP to donate using PayPal. Don’t wait – donate early! Or, arrive at Twin Lakes Park at 10:00 a.m. on March 29 and turn in your donations for the “First Lutheran” team.

As in the past, all funds raised by the First Lutheran Team will be matched by the Matching Gifts program. First Lutheran has been a strong participant ever since the March began in 2003 and has won many awards in the team competition. Funds raised at the March for Parks go directly to projects in our parks and trails, without spending tax dollars. Your donations go right back into our facilities that you use every day. Please join us on March 29! You will have fun, get some exercise, and show our community that First Lutheran is an active church committed to helping make Westmoreland County a better place to live and work!

MARCH NOISY OFFERING IS FOR LUTHERAN SUMMER MUSIC

LUTHERAN SUMMER MUSIC (LSM) is the nation's premier faith-based music academy for high school students, grades 8-12. In addition to advanced musical instruction and numerous performance opportunities, LSM students form an international community, living together for four weeks on the campus of Valparaiso University.

Since 1981, this program has guided the lives of young musicians, who credit LSM as the starting place for their future careers and vocations. Young musicians from across the country are invited to join this joyful community to expand their musical skills, build supportive relationships and lifelong friendships, and find welcome in using their musical gifts in worship. The music program includes private lessons, large ensembles, chamber music groups, musicianship classes, concerts, and recitals.

Worship is central to daily life at LSM. The three primary worship events are MORNING PRAYER, EVENING PRAYER, and SUNDAY EUCHARIST. This service is filled with music and follows a traditional Lutheran liturgy. Since its founding, LSM has reached musicians and music appreciators of all ages and faith traditions. LSM remains rooted in Lutheran music, worship and liturgical traditions.

The connections students make are immeasurable, getting to know oneself, becoming connected to others, and feeling closer to God. Your generosity helps make all of this happen. Thank you.

I will
Follow
God
like
Ruth



RUTH CIRCLE will meet Thursday, March 13 at 7:00 PM in the church parlor. We welcome all women of the congregation to join us.

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.

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 March.

Here is our wish list:

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

ORDER LILIES FOR EASTER

Lilies will again decorate our church on Easter Sunday. You are invited to purchase a plant at a cost of \$15.00 and “lend” it to the parish. Plants that are purchased may be removed from the church following the 10:45 AM Easter Sunday Service. Any lilies that are not removed by the Wednesday following Easter will be given to our Food from the Heart guests.

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. All orders are due by **Monday, April 14.**

In honor of _____

By _____

and/or

In memory of _____

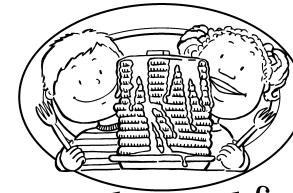
By _____

Amount enclosed \$ _____

SHROVETIDE BRUNCH

SUNDAY, March 2

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



Pancake Breakfast

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.

PLEASE RETURN THE FORM BELOW IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND OR CALL THE CHURCH OFFICE TO LET US KNOW SO WE CAN PLAN.

FAMILY NAME _____

NUMBER ATTENDING SHROVETIDE BRUNCH _____

Ash Wednesday's wake-up call

“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

With these words from Genesis 3:19 and the swipe of a dirty thumb across our foreheads, Ash Wednesday propels us into Lent with the proper context to understand our lives as stewards of all that God entrusts to us.

Ash Wednesday, which falls on March 5th, teaches us that we are mortals, after all. It crushes our ego, dispels our pretensions and drives us deep into God's mysteries: Why are we here? What are our lives all about? What's *really* important? Pray over these questions and profound insights emerge.

We are dust. Yes, but we are *God's* dust. Our body consists of trillions of atoms, each a speck of “dust” created by God billions of years ago. God put us together from the stuff of the universe.

Therefore, we are quite literally “earthy” beings, made of the same material as air, water, soil and stone. As part of creation, we work to preserve, protect and sustain creation.

Therefore, we have reverence for our bodies, expressed through healthy living.

We are breath. We are “dust” into which God has “breathed the Holy breath of life” (Genesis 2:7).

Therefore, every breath we take is holy, reminding us of God's life force in us. Therefore, we look to God to align our lives with God's holy realities of peace, love, joy, justice and truth.

Our time is brief. Our “dust” will return to the earth someday. We are mortal.

Therefore, every hour, every second is sacred. We spend our time wisely, carefully, prayerfully.

Therefore, we do not cling to possessions, knowing that we hold onto them only for a little while.

Therefore, we fill our lives with treasures of lasting value – friendships, trust, love, joy, service, generosity and harmony.

This Lent, spend time in prayer, with openness and honesty. See how God will turn your heart and mind, transforming you into the person you were created to be. Reflect each day on Ash Wednesday. “Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”
--Rob Blezard

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2025 LENTEN CONGREGATIONAL PROJECT

The Lenten Project this year, a clothes collection for The Community Closet at The Free Methodist Church, will be a great opportunity to help our neighbors and clean out our closets! All clean, gently worn clothing will be accepted starting Ash Wednesday, March 5, 2025. There will be boxes available in the Fellowship Hall.

All clothing will be accepted, however there is a particular need for boys clothing sizes 18 months to a men's small. Also accepted are gently used backpacks and duffel bags. Many of the clients of The Community Closet are displaced children to whom small stuffed animals, coloring books and small boxes of crayons are provided. If you have no clothing at this time, perhaps you would be interested in purchasing some of these items.

The Community Closet was conceived of 10 years ago when a need for free clothing for people in the Greensburg area was identified. Kathy Statler, a member of The Free Methodist Church, spearheaded the project and has watched the need grow steadily. The Closet is now associated with 14 agencies that assist families and children in crisis. Some of these are Allied Family Solutions, The Children's Institute, Embrace Grace, Glade Run Lutheran Services, The Westmoreland Children's Bureau and Westmoreland Case Management.

Volunteer opportunities will also occur when the collection is complete to separate the items by gender and size. If interested in helping, please contact Joanie Knobloch or Bobbie Laciak.

Thank you in advance for your kindness during this Lenten season and happy cleaning!



You Are Invited to CampBlast!

Saturday, May 10th 2025, 11am-4:30pm

Join us for a day of FUN that highlights all that Lutherlyn has to offer. Campfire, crafts, gaga ball, archery, zipline, bouldering room, hiking, nature activities, hay rides, games, sports, LEGO room, tours, great food, and MORE!

The best part.... **EVERYTHING IS FREE!**

www.lutherlyn.com/campblast

\$100 off for FIRST-TIME campers!

This coupon entitles FIRST-TIME Lutherlyn campers to \$100 off the registration fee for Summer 2025. This applies to Lutherlyn's overnight week-long programs. Young Folks half-week programs get \$50 off for FIRST-TIME campers. Does not apply to Family Camp, Confirmation Camp, Day Camps, or Small Fry Days.

Must be a FIRST-TIME summer camper.

No additional discounts may be combined with this offer.

Enter coupon code: **FIRST**

Register at **WWW.LUTHERLYN.COM**.

(Please share this code with friends!)



SYNOD ASSEMBLY 2025

Election of a new bishop this year since Bishop Kusserow will be retiring at the end of his term.

April 30: Conference 4 Pre-Caucus Meeting at Salem Lutheran, Delmont (in person only).

May 17: Synod Assembly opens (ZOOM only). There will be one plenary session, including the Ecclesiastical First Ballot for the election of a bishop.

June 12 through June 14: Times to be determined. The remainder of the Synod Assembly (in person only) at La Roche University.

If you are interested in serving as a voting member, representing First Lutheran, please let Pastor Chris know.

Stewardship Moment

My journey to being a Worship Assistant started years ago when I was an acolyte in my former parish. I quickly rose to the position of Sacristan which had several more responsibilities and was grateful that I could continue to serve in this way.

When I became a member here at First, I was looking for something that could fill the void of not being of service at the altar. When the position of Worship Assistant was proposed, I quickly volunteered. Several training sessions later I was able to serve during Worship and found that this was truly a calling for me.

It has been greatly fulfilling to be a part of the worship service, to bring the prayers and communion to you in this way. And I feel it is good for the congregation to see that a lay person can help to bring the worship experience to those attending.

Being of service as a Worship Assistant has been deeply and spiritually gratifying for me and has impacted my faith by bringing me closer in my relationship with God. My hope is that some of this impact on me is forthcoming by my actions to those in the congregation.

I offer an invitation to you, members of the congregation, to consider becoming a worship assistant. You may find it as fulfilling as I do.

Thank you,

Rebecca Brunetta

First Lutheran offers Camperships to help defray the cost of camp. Register with Lutherlyn, then let the church office know to send the campership to Lutherlyn.

For the summer camp schedule, please visit www.lutherlyn.com or ask the office for a copy.

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

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

Remember to
turn your
clocks ahead
Saturday night,
March 8!



**Remember the Bishop
joins us on Sunday,
March 9th**

**YOU ARE INVITED
LENTEN 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

March 6 through April 17

Suggested Lunch
Donation—\$5.00

Worship & Luncheon are not held
on days when Greensburg-Salem
School district declares a school
closing due to snow.