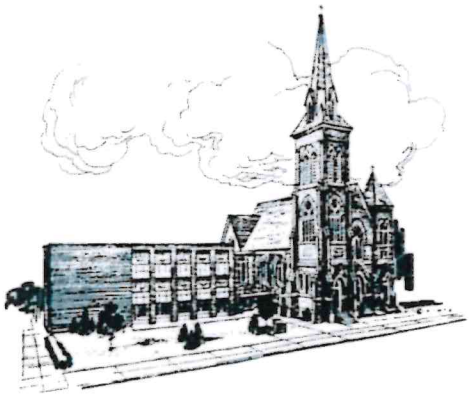

FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
GREENSBURG, PA

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

office@felchurch.org

October 2026

Pastor's Note

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

1 Corinthians 11:23-24 (NRSV)

Dear Friends in Christ,

It is almost October and I am thankful for the cooler nights that have me thinking of Fall and the turning of the leaves. At this time of year my thoughts often turn toward our upcoming celebration of the Reformation, Martin Luther, and the other reformers.

This year our Adult Study is focused on Luther's Small Catechism, and we are using a book titled, *by heart: Conversations with Luther's Small Catechism*. As I am thinking about the Reformation this year, which at least partially led to Luther's writing of the Small Catechism, there are a couple of things in my readings that keep coming back to mind.

In addition to writing the Small Catechism, many of you probably know that Luther also translated the Bible into German. "For Luther, the main thing was to give scripture to God's people in the same way Jesus' body and blood were given: "for you."[1] Luther recognized the importance of having scripture available to the people in their own language so that they could know of God's love for them.

The same is true of the Small Catechism. "Every section of the Small Catechism has the same goal at its core: getting God's work in Christ to penetrate deep inside your heart."[2] And that is why, "In the catechism the thing on which the meaning of everything else hinges is Luther's explanation of the second article of the Creed."[3]

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For us, as Christians, it is all about Christ. He is the one who gave His body and blood "for you." Martin Luther came to know the grace that Jesus brought, and Luther wanted everyone to know that grace through Christ personally.

As we approach October and once again look to celebrate the Reformation, may we remember Luther at his best. He recognized God's Grace revealed to us in Jesus, who gave himself "for you," and Luther wanted everyone to find the peace that he had found in that truth of God's love.

Know that you are loved by God and saved by Grace through Faith in Christ. And if you want to know more about Luther's Small Catechism, which was written to, "[get] God's work in Christ to penetrate deep inside your heart," I encourage you to join the conversation on October 19th.

Together in Christ,

Pastor Chris

[1] Erwin, R. Guy, R. Guy Erwin, Mary Jane Haemig, et al. b*y heart: Conversations with Martin Luther's Small Catechism*. Augsburg Fortress, 2017. P. 10

[2] Erwin, 7.

[3] Erwin, 13.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

First Lutheran is now calling for Church Council nominations. There are four openings for three-year terms (January 2027-December 2029) that need to be filled. Nominations will be taken up to and including Sunday, November 1. Elections will take place on Sunday, November 15. Please see any Council Member or Pastor Chris if you would like more information.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS, NOVEMBER 1 AND 15

Brief congregational meetings will precede worship services on November 1 and 15 for the purpose of nominating and electing congregation council members.

On November 1, nominations will be received. Balloting and/or elections will follow two weeks later at the Sunday, November 15 meeting. In addition to elections, we will be bringing the constitution up for ratification. This follows our adoption of Constitutional changes on March 15, 2026.

Stewardship: All Things Great and Small

"This is the reason that I, Paul, am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you, and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ" (Ephesians 3:1-3).

There is that word: commission (which means stewardship). It is a word that so many Christian people balk at. In fact, it isn't really a joke that when the word "stewardship" is mentioned in church, people guard their wallets and purses. The Church has earned this response. Over the generations, the Church has allowed the word stewardship to become equated with the financial resources necessary to compensate staff and pay bills.

So, as we consider simple gifts, does it surprise you that Paul would willingly talk about stewardship with the people of Ephesus? Notice what he isn't talking about: money. What Paul is talking about is REAL stewardship, the stewardship of God's grace. That is the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

The greatest gift that our Lord has given us to steward is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. You are led by God to steward the resources and gifts entrusted to you and they are to be stewarded for the sake of the Gospel. How you use your gifts tells a great deal about what you think of the Gospel. Faithful stewardship is using the gifts given to you to help your family, friends, congregation, and community to better understand the Gospel.

Of course, not one of us is always faithful in our stewardship for the sake of the Gospel. What Paul calls us to do in these words is repentance. Today we ask the Lord to work in and through our stewardship so that the people around us will KNOW about our stewardship of the Gospel as individuals and as a congregation.

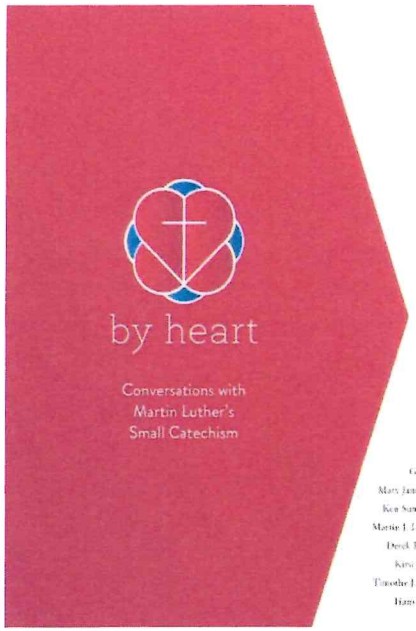
(excerpts from "Simple Gifts: A series of devotions on stewardship. © 2019 The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod)

Ruth Circle will meet Wednesday, October 14 at 7:00 PM in the church parlor. All women of the congregation are invited and welcome to join the fellowship.

OCTOBER NOISY OFFERING is FOR LUTHERAN INDIAN MINISTRIES

The Noisy Offerings in September and October will support Lutheran Indian Ministries (LIM). Based in Wisconsin, LIM's focus is outreach and Christian ministry to Indian and Alaskan Native Americans, many who carry feelings of anger, hopelessness, and/or trauma stemming from the ways their communities have historically been treated. LIM is faith-based aligning most closely with Lutheran theology and believe "the only true hope for healing is to deal with the effects of trauma in a biblical way." The goal is to bring Christ into people's lives as the best way to help address many old and new emotional and traumatic challenges that impact both individuals and their communities. To learn more please view a five-minute video at:

lutheranindianministries.org/about-lim-2025



Adult Study

Our Adult Study of Luther's Small Catechism, utilizing *by heart: Conversations with Martin Luther's Small Catechism,* continues on October 19th in the Fellowship Hall. You can join the conversation at either 1:30 pm or 6:00 pm. In October we will focus on Chapter 2, The Ten Commandments.

Books are available in the office. If you are able, we are requesting $15/book to help cover the cost.

Future dates are November 16th and December 14th.

REFORMATION REFLECTIONS

A question! Did your parents teach you the Small Catechism?

I asked this question of a group of Lutheran women at a workshop at Lutherlyn earlier this fall.

Their answer was a loud laugh. Pastors teach the Catechism. A few people conceded that their parents might have taught them the Lord's Prayer, but not the meaning.

With the birth of his first son in June of 1526 Martin Luther became a family man. This turned his mind to pondering ways to teach children. He surveyed his community to see what would need to be done to teach the faith. *The Small Catechism* appeared in May 1529. In that first issue of the catechism, he reported what he found: "Good God, what wretchedness I beheld! The common people, especially those who live in the country have no knowledge whatsoever of Christian teaching, and unfortunately many pastors are quite incompetent and unfitted for teaching. Although the people are supposed to be Christian, are baptized, and receive the holy sacrament, they do not know the Lord's Prayer, The Creed , or the Ten Commandments ....."

The Small Catechism contains the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer with explanations, teachings on Holy Baptism, the Sacrament of the Altar and instructions for personal prayer, The Morning Blessing, The Evening Blessing, and The Table Blessing—basics of the Christian faith.

The Large Catechism was written for pastors to teach adults and heads of households and contains a more expanded version of the basics.

Now another question was, how can they learn if they can't read? Martin Luther realized that education was the answer. But Martin didn't stop with the education of boys—which would have been accepted well enough in his day and age. No, he strongly believed that every human being should learn to read. That includes girls and women. Universal education didn't really get going until the early part of the 20th Century. Luther was a man way ahead of his time.

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Luther then did another very unexpected thing that put him way ahead of his time. He left his estate to his wife, Katherina. In Saxony, the inheritance law for widows was, a coat to wear, a stool to sit on and a cane to help you walk. Martin Luther left his entire estate to his wife, Katherina. She had begun to manage their earthly possessions when they were married and she not only managed, but she also excelled in the management of his household and his possessions. Who else cared about his family enough to take excellent care of them?

After Luther died this little eccentricity created a whole new controversy. For a while Katie indeed was left with what Saxon law dictated. She knew that Martin had left her the whole estate and since she'd been managing and taking care of said estate for all of their married life, she appealed to her brother, Hans, who was a lawyer, to see if he could get Martin's will enforced. It took the better part of a year, but Elector John, heir to Duke Frederick the Wise finally decreed that Martin Luther's will should be followed.

Martin Luther had a clear intelligence, an open and honest mind and common sense enough to implement the conclusions that he was led to by his thinking. He was a man whose thinking was clearly way ahead of his time.

Joan Orr

HARVEST HOME SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18 The First Family will celebrate harvest Home on Sunday, October 18 at both worship services. Cornstalks and pumpkins will adorn the sanctuary, and you are asked to bring canned goods and food staples to the church.

Your gifts will help in our Food Pantry with providing food to the needy in our area. "Now thank we all our God!"

Financial Update Through August 2026 Giving		
2026	2025	Budget
$147,329	$151,591	$170,670
Expense		
2026	2025	Budget
$254,566	$290,779	$319,330

AUGUST CHRISTIAN OUTREACH UPDATE

16 bags of emergency food distributed

14 health/personal care kits distributed

275 FFTH lunches served

40 Households served through Food Bank

MEMORIAL GIFTS RECEIVED

First Lutheran Church's Memorial Fund has received a memorial gift in memory of Joanne Morgan from Janet Wineman.

Harrold Zion Lutheran Church is having a Comedy Matinee show on Sunday, November 15th at 2:00 PM. The title of the show is **Laugh With the Lutherans,** and we would love to have our fellow Christians join us for a hilarious afternoon. Slapstick Comedy Production will provide two Standup comedians (PG rated). Cost is $40 per person, which covers admission and food. There will be wine and raffle baskets.

Contact Harrold Zion 724 837-7327 for ticket purchase and information.

Team Trivia nights have been planned for the remaining months of 2026. Mark these Thursdays on your calendar if you would like to attend: Oct. 22, Nov. 19, and Dec. 17.
*If interested, meet for dinner 6PM. Everyone is responsible for buying his/her own dinner.
*Team Trivia begins at 7PM
*RSVP to Teresa Graziotto by the Monday prior to the trivia night.

grazebear@gmail.com or (724) 331 - 7134

FIRLU Trivia

Test your First Lutheran Church knowledge

1. How many organ pipes are in each chamber both visible and internally housed?
2. How many steps are there from the Fellowship Hall to the third floor of the education building?
3. How many exterior entry points are there to the church and education building?
4. What else was to be included in the building expansion of 1959?
5. Why are there two Lutheran churches within one block of each other?

(answers will be in next month's church newsletter)

Last month's answers:

1. How is the church heated? – natural gas/hot water
2. How many years has Marvin Huls been our choir director/organist? – 55 years
3. When was the Fellowship Hall renovated? – 1991
4. How many years did Pastor Pfiefer lead First Church? – 0 years
   (This answer is correct because of a misspelling to Pastor Pfeifer's name. He did serve the church for 28 years).
5. How many years did Pastor Scanlon lead First Church? – 25 years

Piano,
Pipes,

Peals &
Premieres

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR...

"Piano, Pipes, Peals, and Premieres"

Sunday, October 18, 2026 at 4:00 PM
First Evangelical Lutheran Church
Greensburg, Pennsylvania

This free program will be presented by Josh Beck (jazz piano), Marc Tourre (baritone), Kathleen Campbell (alto sax), the FELC Handbell Choir.....AND includes the world premiere of "No Height, No Depth" (in honor of Marvin Huls) by composer Jonathan P. White, AND the re-premiere of "Serenity Prayer" (in honor of FELC member Gwen Irwin's 100th birthday this November) by composer Mark Hayes. Both premieres will be performed by the FELC choir, guest singers, and accompanist Nancy Finke Sheehan.

Reception to follow.

SPREAD THE WORD!

YOU ARE INVITED to FIRST THURSDAY WORSHIP & LUNCHEON AT ZION'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH.

Services begin at 12:05 PM. Lunch is served following the service.

October 1: Pizzaburgers, Tossed Salad, Chips, and Apple Pie
Suggested Lunch Donation—$5.00

MATCHING GIFT PROGRAM 2026 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.

Message for Thrivent Financial Members

At the first of each year, 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 .

Trex Recycling Challenge

Plastic Patrol

Everyone is now a part of the Plastic Patrol of First Lutheran Church. Keep bringing in your plastic bags, etc. so we can **keep it out of our landfills** and get a *chance(s) each quarter to win a Trex bench for our park.

Totals to date:

Oct-Dec. 2025 166 pounds

Jan-Mar. 2026 253 pounds

Apr – Jun 2026 252 pounds

July – Sept. 2026 242.8 pounds (as of September 16, 2026)

Grand total to date: 913.8 pounds

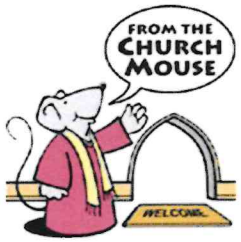
LET'S KEEP RECYCLING THAT PLASTIC!!!

**for each 250 pounds of plastic collected per quarter, one entry into a random drawing to win and choose a bench or one of 4 other prizes.*

Serving At Worship In October 2026

	10/4	10/11	10/18	10/25
8:15 Acolyte	Rachel Boggs	Levi Boggs	Nathaniel Boggs	Colton Boggs
10:45 Acolyte		Owen Lenhart		Robbie Jefferson
8:15 Lector	Sue Boggs	Kevin Reilly	Liz Rowe	Kim Woodley
10:45 Lector	Bob Errett	Sunshine Keiser	Dan Krack	Malcolm Sias
8:15 Worship Assistant	Kim Woodley	Carolyn Hanzel	Kim Woodley	Kim Woodley
10:45 Worship Assistant	Tawnya Combs	Dianna Marusko	Tawnya Combs	Rebecca Brunetta

Altar Guild for October includes Kim Woodley and Tawnya Combs.



FIRLU HAS HEARD...

*** that as of August 30th, our general offering receipts were $134,073. Last year they were $134,405.

*** that **Noisy Offering** will be collected the first Sunday of October to benefit Lutheran Indian Ministries.

*** 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, October 15**. 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, your effort will be greatly appreciated.

*** that the deadline for the **October newsletter is Monday, October 19**. Please be prompt. You may submit your articles to **office@felchurch.org**.

*** that a big THANK YOU goes out to everyone who contributed to our Cookies for First Responders. We were able to provide 12 large cookie trays which were delivered after church on Rally Day.

Have ideas for other newsletter items? We would love to hear those too. Please send them into the office. Do you have any special announcements to share with FIRLU? Please share them with the office.

See you at worship,

FIRLU

"My help comes from the Lord,
the maker of heaven and earth."

Psalm 121:2

FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
246 South Main Street
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felchurch.org

PASTOR.....Chris Combs
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC.....Marvin Huls
CHURCH TREASURER.....Amy Boggs
OFFICE MANAGER.....Patricia Pluck
OFFICE SECRETARY.....Gretchen Fischer
CUSTODIAN.....Tim Rowe

CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS

Kip Boggs
Rebecca Brunetta — President
Tom Flory
Linda Griffith
Teresa Graziotto
Charlie Kaylor
Dan Krack
Bobbie Laciak
Leon (Bud) Nusselt
William Pfeifer III
Holly Rowe — Vice President
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 9:30 A.M.

Elevator and Hearing Assistance Available

FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
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