FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
GREENSBURG, PA

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August 2026

Pastor's Note

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.
Galatians 6:9-10 (NIV)

Dear Friends in Christ,

As we welcome the month of August, we see the oft recognized season of summer coming to an end in just a few weeks. I hope that you are able to enjoy those final weeks of summer, a season filled with vacations and trips. It is a season that invites us to slow down a little, take a little break, and hopefully enjoy God's good creation and reflect on the many blessings God has provided.

August might be associated with the end of summer as so many prepare to go back to school, but did you know that August 4th is National Chocolate Chip Cookie Day? I don't know how I never knew that before, but I am thankful that Tawnya found this as we were talking about this very article. It might seem like a lighthearted observance, but it also offers a wonderful reminder of the joy found in the simple gifts of life. A warm cookie shared with a friend, a neighbor, or grandchild can become an act of kindness that strengthens relationships and one that reminds us that God's love is often experienced in ordinary moments.

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Paul, as he writes to the Galatians, encourages them and us to not become weary in doing good. There will be a harvest at the proper time. With that encouragement we also need to remind ourselves that doing good isn't always about grand acts. Small acts of kindness --- a smile, a visit to a friend or relative, a phone call, and yes even a cookie shared with someone --- these are acts that God uses to show God's love to the world.

Summer is soon drawing to a close and I hope that you have found much to be thankful for, and I hope that you never grow weary of doing good. Perhaps consider the joy brought by a simple chocolate chip cookie and share one with a friend or neighbor. Who knows what God might do with that, for you and for your neighbor?

Together in Christ,

Pastor Chris

SUMMER FOOD DRIVE

During the summer months, the Christian Outreach Committee will be collecting nonperishable items for our Emergency Food Cupboard. These items will be used to assist many individuals and families in our community.

We have also seen an increased need for personal care items. Anything you are able to provide is greatly appreciated!

August is "Canned Food Month": Items especially needed are:
Soup, Fruit, Canned pasta (SpaghettiOs, etc.)

August Personal Care: Toothpaste, Toothbrush (single or 2-pack), dish liquid, laundry detergent (small size)

A basket is located in the education building foyer for your donations.

Please **check the expiration dates** before donating, as we cannot distribute expired items in the Emergency Food bags. Thank you!

AUGUST 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.

Saturday Worship In the Park

Weather permitting

Worship in the Park is back!

This summer we will once again have worship in the park. It will be on August 8th and August 22nd. These services will be at 6:00 pm.

This is casual worship in the park (or the Fellowship Hall if necessary). Please bring your favorite camp chair and dress for the outdoors. Hope to see you there!

Please plan to stay after worship on August 22nd for dinner (Ham BBQ, macaroni & cheese, fruit, & cookies)!

"Blessed are you, Lord God, the God of Israel; you alone do wondrous deeds."

Psalm 72:18

Rally Day Cookies for First Responders!

Sunday, September 13th Rally Day

Hands are needed to:

- **Make cookies!**
- **Deliver cookies to the Fellowship Hall by 10 am Saturday, September 12th!**
- **Pack cookies on Saturday, September 12th.**
- **Deliver cookies to First Responders after Church on Sunday, September 13th.**

Our Thanks for your help!
The Christian Outreach Committee

2026 NATIONAL 9/11 DAY OF SERVICE & REMEMBRANCE

In recognition of the 2026 National 9/11 Day of Service and Remembrance, we have been invited to be one of the 250 partners to support the Westmoreland County Food Bank.

Donations of nonperishable food items will be accepted from September 1 through September 13 in boxes in the Fellowship Hall and in the Education Building foyer. Monetary donations will also be accepted by use of the yellow envelopes in the pews with the designation WCFB on the envelope, or directly to the office. The Christian Outreach Team will supplement these funds.

By participating, we honor the legacy of 9/11 and the American spirit of looking out for one another" (WCFB).

Living in a state of Gratitude

I was asked to share a few remarks in a Temple Talk after some conversations with Pastor Chris and Rebecca Brunetta. This talk is titled "Living in a state of Gratitude."

As some of you know, I have been dealing with a form of bone marrow cancer for a couple of years in which my body fails to produce enough red blood cells, or even fully sized ones. Anemia, weight loss, and extreme lethargy were the result. The low point was late last summer. Each September, the wife and I prepare for an extended visit to our place on the Outer Banks of North Carolina. I told her that this would probably be my last trip there.

Then in late September, my oncologist wanted me to try taking a twice daily pill called Brukinsa. On Columbus Day, we arrived at the Outer Banks. I was happy and appreciative to have made it there. A couple of weeks later, I made it through an entire day without having to take a nap. By the end of the month, I started to regain some of the 20+ pounds that I had lost.

At the end of October, during my monthly consultation with the oncologist, she informed me that my blood counts had significantly improved. At Thanksgiving, which the wife and I normally host for the family and a couple of close friends, we always say grace before the meal. I felt compelled to announce that I was especially appreciative to be there with them.

In mid-December, my oncologist said that blood counts had continued to improve, and that I had gained back about 10 pounds. Then it was Christmas time, and our kids, spouses and grandchildren descended on the house, just like old times. Eleanor said she would join me at Christmas Eve services here at FELC. I remember sitting in the pew, looking at the poinsettias, the candles at each window, and enjoying the musical selections that Marvin had made for the event. It was a moment of deep satisfaction and appreciation. I had been given a second lease on life.

During the winter, I continued to gain weight and realized that I could do stuff at the Aerobic Center that had not been possible for the past couple of years. Each morning, when getting out of bed, I think "Well, I've been given another day. Better try to put it to good use."

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Then, in February, I received a phone call from one of my Methodist friends about possibly accompanying a small team to help finish a cabin at a new retreat camp being built, in eastern Kentucky. I promised to think about it. Then I realized that perhaps the good Lord was acting through him to reciprocate on the new lease on life I had been given. I called him the next day and said "Yes" for a weeklong mission trip the second week of April.

Within days of that commitment, info on a Lutheran Disaster Relief trip to the Ashville, NC area in May was released. So, I figured the Lord was knocking on the door again, and I had to respond with a "Yes." I am trying to stay aware and grateful for the gift that has been given me and to respond affirmatively in a call to service.

In closing, I have watched as some members of this congregation that have faced their own significant challenges and have persevered. Several members of First Lutheran's congregation have most certainly been an inspiration to me, and for that I thank you.

Bud Nusselt

Financial Update Through June 2026 Giving		
2026	2025	Budget
$110,980	$118,395	$128,002
Expense		
2026	2025	Budget
$186,389	$216,683	$239,498

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 .

Zion's Women of the ELCA invite you to join us in a three-part Bible Study from Gather Magazine entitled "I am Worthy." This three-part Bible Study will help us define who we are, what we can be, and what we do in the world in light of our God given giftedness, identities, and relationships. We will meet the second Wednesday, August 12, at Zion's, Greensburg.

Use the Second Street door (there is one step). Doors will open at 5:30 PM for light refreshments and fellowship to be followed by the Bible Study from 6 to 7 PM.

Each month we will collect "$Change$ for a Change" to support our Synod Women's Organizations (SWO) designated outreach, Reagan's Journey. Their mission is to meet the needs of disabled children who require specialized equipment. They are requesting financial donations so they can support families and assist them in acquiring what each child needs. Bring your $change$ to be placed in a piggy bank. It will be taken to the Fall Retreat at Lutherlyn which will then be given to the folks at Reagan's Journey.

Team Firlu's Favorites had a great time with awesome fellowship and laughter at the June trivia night at Pizza Sienna. In fact, a second Trivia night was requested and is planned for August.

Thursday, August 13 at Pizza Sienna in Greensburg
Trivia Begins at 7 PM.

Dinner at 6 PM. Everyone is responsible for buying their own dinner.

Contact person: RSVP to Teresa Graziotto by Monday, August 3rd at 724-331-7134 or grazebear@gmail.com .

FIRLU Trivia

Test your First Lutheran Church knowledge

1. *What year was the Education Building constructed?*
2. *What year was the current Church Building constructed?*
3. *What year was First Lutheran founded?*
4. *Where can you locate a shuffleboard court on church property?*
5. *What year was the church Park built?*

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

Stewardship: All Things Great and Small

The Gift of Light

Light. It was the very first thing that God spoke into existence. We marvel at the way He created it. But today, it is important that we contemplate just what a simple, yet profound gift light is for us.

Without light, there would be no life on this planet. That is significant! The light that shines on Earth interacts with the green plants all around the globe and the result is the production of oxygen. No oxygen, no breath. No breath means no life. Like all things in our beloved creation, it all ties together.

Light is also a key gift that our Lord gives us in our spiritual life too! Without the light that is Jesus we too would, as Paul says in Ephesians 2, be dead in our trespasses and sins. Sin is darkness. Jesus is the light of life.

In Jesus, this light has shown upon us. Our sin is exposed. But as the light of life pierces the darkness in which we lay, one very *simple*, yet truly profound *gift* is given. His glory rises upon us! His love shines upon us and we are given life!

This light doesn't stop with us either. How we use this gift of light for the sake of our neighbor also reveals God's glory! As we consider this simple gift of light, may the Holy Spirit use that light to show just how good our Lord has been to us and how He is calling us to respond. This is all part of the wonderful task of stewardship for which we have been made and redeemed. <u>As His light shines on us, we are created to reflect it to those around us in what say, what we do and how we give! Simple gifts...yet profound results!</u>

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 (as of June 18, 2026)

July – Sept. 2026 47 pounds (as of July 8, 2026)

Grand total to date: 718 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 August 2026

	8/2	8/9	8/16	8/23	8/30
9:30 Acolyte	Colton Boggs	Robbie Jefferson	Molly Boggs	Nathaniel Boggs	Owen Lenhart
9:30 Lector	Bob Errett	Sunshine Keiser	Bill Pfeifer	Dan Krack	Sue Boggs
9:30 Worship Assistant	Tawnya Combs	Rebecca Brunetta	Dianna Marusko	Kim Woodley	Rebecca Brunetta

Altar Guild for August includes Dianna Marusko, Carolyn Hanzel, and Cindy Bell.

Love to Serve

JUNE CHRISTIAN OUTREACH UPDATE

23 bags of emergency food distributed

11 health/personal care kits distributed

320 FFTH lunches served

45 Households served through Food Bank

Volunteers Needed!

To set-up and clean-up for outdoor worship in the park.

FIRLU HAS HEARD...

*** that as of June 30th, our general offering receipts were $100,697. Last year they were $105,310.

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

*** that there is interest in some church trivia and we need your help. Do you know some interesting facts about First? Please e-mail your trivia questions (and answers) to the office. Then look for those questions in upcoming editions. **Example:** When was the Education Building dedicated and where can you find that information in the building?

*** *that together we are making great strides in keeping harmful plastic out of our landfills!! Thank you to all who bring in their plastic, those who sort the plastic and compact it, and those who deliver the plastic to Westmoreland Cleanways.*

*** 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, August 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, your effort will be greatly appreciated.

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

****A Happy Firlu Story -** *As many of our members are preparing to return to school either as a teacher or student, one member, Sue Boggs, will not be returning to Metzger Elementary School. Sue has retired after being employed by Greensburg Salem School District for the last 19 years. Earlier in her career, Sue spent 10 years working at Pressley Ridge Center for Autism. In fact, Sue hosted summer camps on her farm for these students! Sue has 3 sons and 8 grandchildren. She is looking forward to having the time to participate in various organizations, sort out her house, spend time with her children and grandchildren, and travel. Best wishes and blessings as you start this new chapter in your life Sue!!!*

Have ideas for other newsletter items? We would love to hear those too. Please send into the office.

Do you have any special announcements to share with FIRLU? Please share them with the office.

See you at worship, FIRLU

FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
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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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