

Vine Street Journal

Johnstown, PA

First Lutheran Church

March 2026

A message from Pastor Christy...

"All go to one place; all are from dust, and all turn to dust again." (Ecclesiastes 3:20)

Oh, how we look forward to spring – especially after these past several weeks of snow...snow...and more snow. Soon we will soon begin to see signs of new life, even as we walk on ground that is still frozen and marked by the lingering touch of winter.

Before long, those wonderful bright colors will surround us once again. And as Christians, we journey through this Lenten season anxiously awaiting those first signs of spring. We await that glorious Easter morning and Christ's resurrection. We have hope because of the resurrection; we know the love of Christ through the resurrection.

We began this Lenten season on Ash Wednesday, when we heard the solemn reminder: *"We are dust, and to dust we shall return."* These words humble and ground us. They remind us that we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

Lent is a time of reflection, repentance, prayer, and renewal. It calls us to slow down, to examine our hearts, and once again stand at the foot of the cross. Throughout these weeks, we are also gathering for our midweek Lenten study as we reflect on scenes from *The Chosen*. Through this series, we will see the humility of those who encountered Jesus – and perhaps we will see ourselves as well. We witness his compassion, his teaching, his power, and ultimately his journey toward the cross. These moments help us to walk more intentionally through this Lenten season.

But let us not rush to Easter. Let this forty-day journey of Lent work in and through you. Sit

with the weight of the cross...reflect on the depth of Christ's mercy...and the profound love he has for us. It is by walking the way of the cross that we can truly understand the wonder of the empty tomb. Throughout these forty days, let us walk together...let us hear again the promise of forgiveness...let us be strengthened in the Word...let us be fed at the Lord's table. And let us rest in the sure and certain hope we have in Christ Jesus.

May this Lenten season prepare our hearts for the joy of Easter and may the peace of Christ sustain us until that glorious morning arrives.

SHARING RECIPES...

Crock Pot Spinach Lasagna – Rose Harford

1 lb. of ground beef – browned
Spaghetti sauce – mixed in with ground beef
Lasagna noodles (no cook)
1 bag of spinach
Ricotta cheese mixed with 1 Egg
Mozzarella cheese

Put beef and sauce on bottom of crock pot.
Layer spinach, noodles, sauce, and cheese.
Repeat layers ending with cheese on top.

Cook on High for 3 hours.



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FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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PASTOR

Christy Harford

MINISTER OF MUSIC

Kim Rauch

OFFICE MANAGER

Deneillia (Danny) Mitchell

CLEANER

Paul Eisenhuth

CHURCH COUNCIL

Jessica Boring, Barry Critchfield (Treasurer), James Hargreaves, Karen Hargreaves, Josh Rinaman, Janice Hill, Vicki Price, Dick Schrott (Vice President), Fawn Slonka (President), Shirley Waclo (Secretary).

~ PASTORAL ACTS ~

None.

~ CONTRIBUTIONS ~

CHURCH PRESERVATION FUND

Donna Caprous

Caryl Swanson

Barry A. Critchfield

Ann Furlong

Jane Hanechak

Beverly Brocious

Barbara Penrod

Jennifer Bennear

Debbie & Lance Shomo

Greer Koeller

Carol Allison

Sharon Orner

Linda Prozialeck

Harriet Miller

Robert Abele

Albert Johnson

Susan & William Hartland

Peggy Lichtenfels- I.M.O Nancy Gay

SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION

Keiko Hurst – Special Thanks Contribution.

Jane Hanechak – Barbara Pingatore Youth Edu Fund (I.H.O Barb Pingatore)

Jessica Boring – Donation to Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner

George & Anne Fattman – TNR Program Sponsor

Ann Furlong – TNR Contributor

Richard & Patricia Schrott – TNR program Sponsor

Fawn Slonka – TNR Contribution (I.M.O Paul Stephenson)

Caryl Swanson – TNR Contributor



Next Journal Deadline

Tuesday
March 17th , 2026

Share your news with us!

**Income and Expense Summary
as of January 31, 2025**

	Current YTD Actual Jan. 1 thru Jan. 31, 2026	Current YTD Budget Jan. 1 thru Jan. 31, 2026	Difference over+/under- Budget
Regular Offering Income	\$15,195.60	\$14,581.44	\$614.16
Trust Fund Income	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other Income	\$0.00	\$237.46	-\$237.46
TOTAL INCOME	\$15,195.60	\$14,818.90	\$376.70
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$19,292.37	\$14,992.53	\$4,299.84



Due to lack of a quorum, the agenda was reviewed, but no immediate actions were needed. Therefore, all information will be reviewed at the Thursday, March 12th meeting.

Submitted by **Shirley Waclo**, Council Secretary.

Council elected officers for the 2026-2027 council year. They are:

- President: Fawn Slonka
- Vice President: Dick Schrott
- Treasurer: Barry Critchfield
- Secretary: Shirley Waclo

The next regular council meeting will be March 12th, 2026, at 7:00 pm.



Upcoming worship opportunities:

March 1 – 2nd Sunday in lent.

March 4 – *The Chosen* @ Benscreek Lutheran

church.

March 11 – *Midweek Lenten Study The Chosen- First Lutheran*

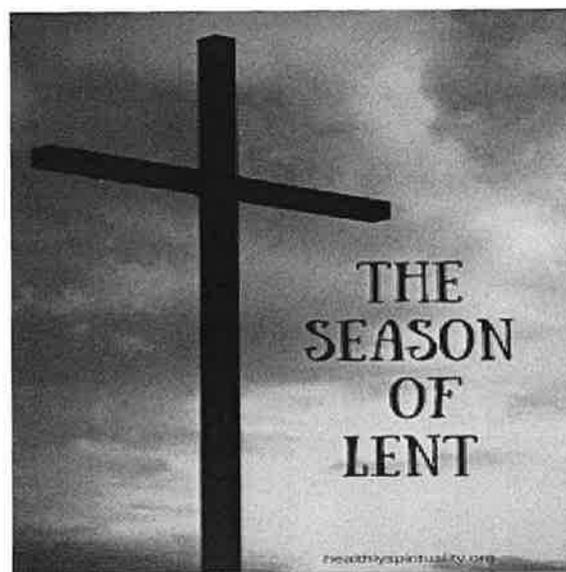
March 15– 4th Sunday in Lent. Service of the Word/Healing Service

March 18 – *The Chosen@ Benscreek Lutheran church.*

March 22– 5th Sunday in Lent (OLAS) & Noon Movie Matinee/Noon Joint Choir Rehearsal

March 25 – *Midweek Lenten study The Chosen- First Lutheran*

March 29 – *Palm/Passion Sunday. Noon Hospitality & Noon Joint Choir Rehearsal*



March Readings and Psalm

March 1 – Second Sunday in lent

- **Genesis 12:1-4a**
The blessing of God upon Abram
- **Psalm 121**
I lift up my eyes to the hills; my help comes from the LORD.
- **Roman 4:1-5,13-17**
The promise to those who share Abraham's faith
- **John 3:1-17**
The mission of Christ: to save the world

March 8 – Third Sunday in Lent

- **Exodus 17:1-7**
Water From the Rock in the Wilderness
- **Psalm 95**
Let us shout for joy to the rock of salvation.
- **Romans 5:1-11**
Reconciled to God by Christ's death
- **John 4 : 5-42**
Baptismal image: the woman at the well

March 15 – Fourth Sunday in Lent

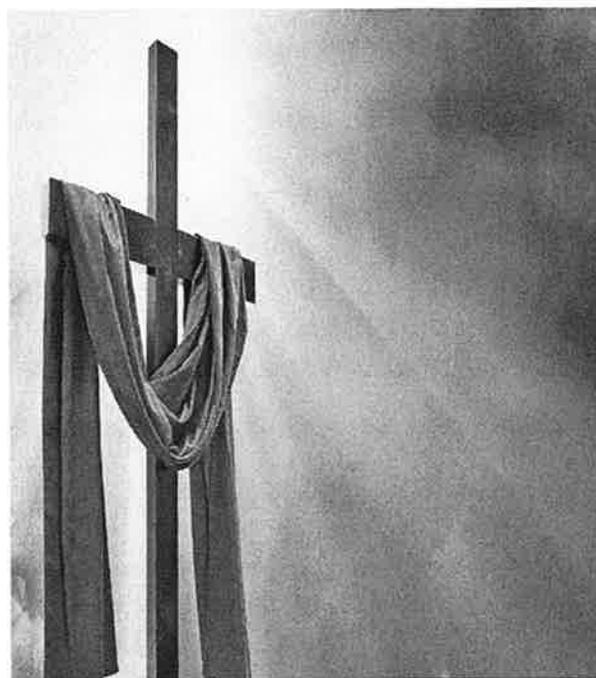
- **1 Samuel 16:1-13**
David is chosen and anointed
- **Psalm 23**
You anoint my head with oil.
- **Ephesians 5:8-14**
Awake from sleep, live as children of light
- **John 9 : 1- 41**
Baptismal image: the man born blind

March 22 – Fifth Sunday in Lent

- **Ezekeil 37:1-14**
The dry bones of Israel brought to life
- **Psalm 130**
I wait for you, O lord; in your word is my hope
- **Romans 8:6-11**
Life in the spirit
- **John 11:1-45**
Baptismal image: the raising of Lazarus

March 29 – Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday

- **Matthew 21:1-11**
Jesus enters Jerusalem
- **Isaiah 50:4-9a**
The servant of the lord submits to suffering
- **Psalm 31:9-16**
Into your hands, O lord, I command my spirit
- **Philippians 2:5-11**
Humbled to the point of death on a cross
- **Matthew 26: 14-27:66**
The passion of the lord
- **Matthew 27:11-54 (alternate)**
The passion of the Lord



Spring Is in the Air: The April 2026 Tuesday Noon Recital Series

This April, we're thrilled to bring the sounds of spring through our *Tuesday Noon Recital Series*, featuring four diverse performances. We are excited to welcome back a beloved organ program and the highly anticipated All-Star Jazz Band, which showcases the talents of students from five local high schools.

The April 2026 Tuesday Noon Recitals:

- **April 7** – *Laura Williamson* (Piano): Set the mood for spring with a delightful selection of light classical music.
- **April 14** – *The All-Star Jazz Band*: Experience the musical energy of high school instrumentalists, directed by five talented teachers.
- **April 21** – *Vox Nova Choral Ensemble* from Mount Aloysius College, under the direction of Nancy Way, will present a powerful choral performance.
- **April 28** – *H. Preston Showman* (Organ): Enjoy the rich sounds of the E.M. Skinner pipe organ, featuring recent updates to instrument.

The recitals are open to the public and are offered free of charge, thanks to the generosity of our supporters. In addition, a complimentary lunch will be served after each recital as part of our ongoing outreach to the community.

Most performances will also be repeated in the afternoon at local care homes, bringing music to those who may not be able to attend

in person. This extension of our programs is made possible by a generous grant from the 1889 Foundation.

We invite you to join us and consider supporting the Tuesday Noon Recital Series. Your contributions help us continue offering these enriching musical experiences and complimentary luncheons to all. The annual invitation to support the series has been mailed, and we deeply appreciate your continued support of this important music ministry.

ORGAN UPDATE

I wish there was better news to report on the E.M. Skinner organ project. At present we are awaiting a replacement computer which failed after just a few weeks of having the organ operational. Surely, the delay is an inconvenience, but the good news is that the parts are under warranty. In anticipation to everything getting back online, we have scheduled an organ program for the Tuesday Noon Recital Series in April.

I appreciate your concern and your patience.

KimR.





The generosity of First Lutherans reaches beyond our church walls, into the community, the church at large and globally. We receive notes of thanks and acknowledgement for many of the gifts given. Acknowledgements received are noted each month in the VSJ and posted on a bulletin board located in the

Thank you to the **February Altar Guild:** Caryl Swanson, Greer Koeller, Barb Penrod, Shirley Waclo, Vicki Price, Karen Bennett, Polly Grubb, Fawn Slonka, and Donna Kovalchek, Annie Hayes, and Carol Massingill.

We will continue training for Altar Guild at 10:15am on Sundays in March for Set up and clean up.

Thank you to Barb Miltenberger for making new letters for our **Christmas Banner.** Work on banners will be ongoing.

Thank you to my **February pianists,** Joel Hoshaw, George Fattman, and Linda Prozialeck.

Thank you to the **Tower Bell Ringers:** Heidi Staib, Pastor Christy, George Fattman, Anne Fattman, Vicki Price, and Kim Rauch.

Thank you to **February Lectors:** Vicki Price, Tom Roberts, Fawn Slonka, JD and Josie Hill, Joel Hoshaw, George Fattman.





Every 11:00AM Sunday worship service is now live on Facebook! If you can't attend in person, please join us on

Facebook! If you're not a Facebook member, subscribe. Then, go to First Lutheran's Facebook page. Click on the LIVE post with the current date. Captions for the voices are also available on Facebook live. To see the captions, click on the little gear that appears when you click the video window. On the screen that appears, click on closed captions to turn them on.

We will continue to post videos of weekly recorded 11:00AM Sunday worship on YouTube.com, First Lutheran Johnstown channel. We plan to have the live worship also on YouTube in the future.

Many thanks to our video ministry team, *Bill Grubb, Bill Hargreaves, Bill Price, Bill Weible and Rob Abele* for shooting the video for YouTube & Facebook each week. Thanks also to *Bill Grubb and Barry Critchfield* for helping to run the internet cables that made these live broadcasts possible.

Mark your calendars for the Second Annual Movie Matinee.

Last year at this time we had such a good time watching a showing of a Sight and Sound production. The showing was on a Sunday following the church service and was preceded by a pizza party lunch. Everyone enjoyed the afternoon and indicated that they wanted a repeat.

So here it is. This year on Sunday, March 22 we will have a showing of Moses. And, of course, will start off with pizza, salad and dessert. No movie is complete without popcorn and boxes of theater candy and those will be there also.

Looking forward to another Benscreek Lutheran, First Lutheran event. See you all on March 22.

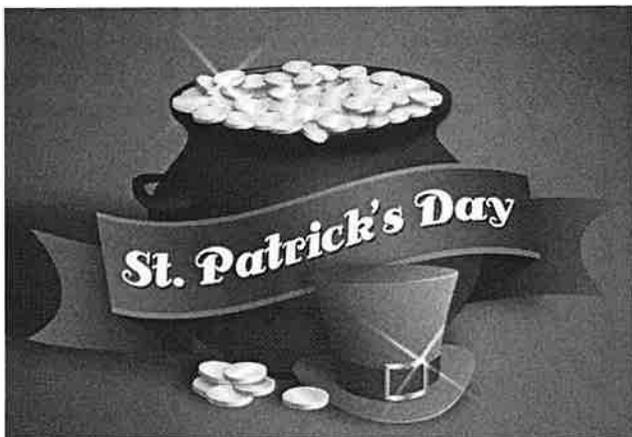
Upcoming events:

Paint Party.

We are excited to welcome Uptown Painting who will lead us in a paint party on April 25 from 11:00 AM until 2:00 PM. Watch your bulletins and the April Vine Street Journal for details. This will be a fun event for all.

May Workday

A Saturday in early May will be our next workday. Last year we laid mulch outdoors and thoroughly cleaned the lounge indoors on a Saturday morning in May. Watch for this year's date. Lunch will also be provided.





Worship and Music Notes

Looking ahead: We will have a **Joint Choir** again for Maundy Thursday (April 2nd at Benscreek) Rehearsals will be March 22nd and March 29th at noon at First Lutheran.

Healing Service will be March 14th and 15th. No Communion

Of the Land and Seasons liturgy will be at the change of seasons on March 21st and 22nd.

Sponsorships

We Have Bulletins Sponsorship & Tribune Democrat Sponsorship.

sign-up sheets in lounge area, feel free to add your names if you would like to sponsor any of the above .



Volunteer Page - Month of March

ALTAR GUILD

- 1 Vicki Price, Greer Koeller, Caryl Swanson
8 Vicki Price, Polly Grubb, Shirley Waclo
15 Vicki Price
22 Vicki Price
29 Vicki Price

COUNCIL GREETERS - Fawn Slonka

FLOWER DELIVERY- Vicki Price

ACOLYTES

- 1 Ushers
8 Ushers
15 Ushers
22 Ushers
29 Ushers

COMMUNION ASSISTANT

- 1 Barry Critchfield
8 Dan Hill
15 Jody Kirk
22 Calvin Anderson
29 Vicki Price

LECTORS

- 1 George Fattman
7* Joel Hoshaw
8 Dan Hill
14* Vicki Price
15 Joel Hoshaw
21* Josh Rinaman
22 Calvin Anderon
28* Heidi Staib
29 Vicki Price
*Saturdays

SATURDAY PIANISTS

- 7 Joel Hoshaw
14 Vicki Price
21 Linda Prozialeck
28 Heidi Staib

SOUND

- 1 Calvin Ansderson
8 Rob Abele
15 Bill Grubb
22 Chuck Staib
29 Harry Bennett

VIDEO

- 1 Bill Hargreaves
8 Bill Weible
15 Rob Abele
22 Bill Grubb
29 Bill Price

TOWER BELLS

- Vicki Price Sunday 1, 8, 15, 22, 29
Christy Harford Monday 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
George Fattman Tuesday 3, 10, 17, 24, 31
Anne Fattman Wednesday 4, 11, 18, 25
Vicki Price Thursday 5, 12, 19, 26
Kim Rauch Friday 6, 13, 20, 27
George Fattman Saturday 7, 14, 21, 28



March 2026

First Evangelical Lutheran Church – Johnstown, Pennsylvania
814-536-7521 email: firstlutheran@wpia.net
Office Hours: Mon. thru Fri. 9 am – 2:00 pm

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
1 2nd Sunday in Lent 10:45 – Sunday School 11:00-Word & Sacrament Noon Hospitality	2 11:00 – Staff Meeting 11:45 – Communion 12 – Prayer Meeting	3 6:30 - Bell Choir	4 6 – Midweek Lenten Study The Chosen Benscreek	5	6	7 Lent 3 5:00-Word and Sacrament
8 3rd Sunday in Lent 10:45 – Sunday School 11:00-Word & Sacrament Noon Hospitality	9 11:00 – Staff Meeting 11:45 – Communion 12 – Prayer Meeting	10 6:30 – Bible Study 6:30 – Bell Choir	11 6 – Midweek Lenten Study The Chosen First 7 – Council	12 7 – Council	13	14 Lent 4 5:00- Service of the Word Healing Service
15 4th Sunday in Lent 10:45 – Sunday School 11:00-Service of the Word Healing Service Noon Hospitality	16 11:00 – Staff Meeting 11:45 – Communion 12 – Prayer Meeting	17 VSJ Deadline 6:30 – Bell Choir	18 6 – Midweek Lenten Study The Chosen Benscreek	19	20	21 Lent 5 5:00- Word and Sacrament OLAS
22 5th Sunday in Lent 10:45 – Sunday School 11:00-Word & Sacrament OLAS Noon Movie Matinee Noon Joint Choir Rehearsals	23 11:00 – Staff Meeting 11:45 – Communion 12 – Prayer Meeting	24 6:30 – Bible Study 6:30 – Bell Choir	25 6 – Midweek Lenten Study The Chosen First	26	27	28 Palm/Passion Saturday 5:00- Word and Sacrament
29 Palm/Passion Sunday 10:45 – Sunday School 11:00-Word & Sacrament Noon Hospitality Noon Joint Choir Rehearsals	30 11:00 – Staff Meeting 11:45 – Communion 12 – Prayer Meeting	31 6:30 – Bell Choir				