

Vine Street Journal

Johnstown, PA

First Lutheran Church

September 2025

A message from Vicar Christy...

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.."
(Ps. 23:1)

As September begins, with that comes the end of summer, going back to school and the anticipation of fall.

We had a wonderful summer here at First. We welcomed 8 new members by transfer. We look forward to the opportunity to welcome others in the future! We had a certificate presentation to Sunday school youth!! What an awesome thing it is to see the young ones here!! If you see them – please take the opportunity to talk with them!!

Jessica Boring has been serving as Lay Assistant and led worship while I was in Phoenix at Churchwide Assembly. I was blessed to be a part of such a huge assembly of ELCA clergy and lay persons.

As a voting delegate at Churchwide, we elected a new presiding Bishop of ELCA – Bishop Yehiel Curry. He started his journey in the TEEM program and is the first TEEM graduate to become presiding Bishop. There were also many Memorials and Constitutional Amendments that we voted on. It was a very wonderful, but somewhat overwhelming experience. And, given

the opportunity – I would humbly return to again.

As we journey through September, we will be celebrating Holy Cross Sunday on Sunday, September 14, 2025.

Yours in Christ,

Vicar Christy

FESTIVAL CHOIR

You are welcome to join us to sing in the Festival Choir celebrating Vicar Christy's Ordination Service tentatively set for Saturday, September 27, 2025.

Rehearsals are Sunday, September 14 and 21 at Noon at First Lutheran Church in the Choir Room.

Rehearsal tracks and music is available – see Kim Rauch.

ALL ARE WELCOME!!!



Vine Street Journal

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FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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+ + +

VICAR

Christy Harford

MINISTER OF MUSIC

Kim Rauch

LEARNING MINISTRY ASSOCIATE

Barbara J. Pingatore, R.N.

OFFICE MANAGER

Deneillia (Danny) Mitchell

CLEANER

Paul Eisenhuth

CHURCH COUNCIL

Barry Critchfield (Treasurer), *Rob Abele*
(Vice-President), *Bill Price* (President), *James*
Hargreaves, *Karen Hargreaves*, *Jody Kirk*
(Secretary), *Rick Blackford*, *Josh Rinaman*,
Janice Hill, *Dick Schrott*, *Fawn Slonka*, *Shirley*
Waclo.

~ PASTORAL ACTS ~

Vicar Christy Harford
Funeral Service Thomas Fritz
08/13/25

~ CONTRIBUTIONS ~

CHURCH PRESERVATION FUND

Harford Family - I.M.O John A. Kiser
Jennifer Bennear
Donald & Beverley Brocious
Barry A. Critchfield
Ann Furlong
Greer Koeller
Sharon Orner
Patricia & Richard Schrott
Jane Hanechak
Lance & Debbie Shomo
Carol Allison
Donna Caprous
Nancy Gay

ORGAN RESTORATION

George & Anne Fattman
Dan & Janice Hill
Barry A. Critchfield
Fawn Slonka



Next Journal Deadline

Tuesday, September 23rd,
2025

Share your news with us!

In our prayers

In the life of our congregation, there are often important events which touch the lives of the First Lutheran family. We commend them to you and encourage you to share news with us.

+ Sympathy and prayers to the Fritz family on the death of Tom Fritz.

Income and Expense Summary as of July 31, 2025

	Current YTD Actual Jan. 1 thru July 31, 2025	Current YTD Budget Jan. 1 thru July 31, 2025	Difference over+/under- Budget
Regular Offering Income	\$86,290.56	\$96,445.92	-\$10,155.36
Trust Fund Income	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other Income	\$1,407.50	\$1,831.00	-\$423.50
TOTAL INCOME	\$87,698.06	\$98,276.92	-\$10,578.86
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$100,558.79	\$104,337.90	-\$3,779.11

VINE STREET JOURNAL UPDATE:

In an effort to be better stewards of our resources, we are evaluating the current number of mailed copies of the *Vine Street Journal* (VSJ). Due to rising postage costs, we will be transitioning to email-only distribution. Paper copies will still be available at the church office for those who prefer a printed version. If you would like to continue receiving the VSJ by email, please contact the church office with your current email address. Thank you for helping us make this transition smooth and sustainable.



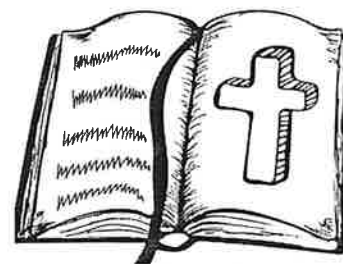
Council met on August 13, at 7:00 pm to review reports and conduct new business.

Treasurer Barry Critchfield reported that contributions are approximately \$10,000 less than this time last year. Council also is looking to reduce the bulk mailing of the Vine Street Journal to conserve costs and paper.

Council is looking for voting members to attend this year's Synod Assembly. As of this printing, there is still a need for one additional voting member. The assembly will be held October 31 and November 1. The assembly will potentially be electing a new bishop at this year's assembly. If anyone is interested in attending, please speak with Vicar Christy,

The Property committee reports that the plaster in the sanctuary is finally becoming dry enough to allow the Elias painters to complete the project. The organ console is now being refurbished, and the goal is to have it completed by the first week of Advent.

The next regular council meeting will be held Tuesday September 9, 2025, at 7:00 pm.



TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY

The Tuesday Bible Study group will begin on **September 9**. We will start our new season with an in-depth look at *The Lord's Prayer*. The study will be based on the book "*Rediscovering the Lord's Prayer*" by Art Simon.

"Art Simon is a man who knows the heart and soul of Jesus's prayer"

New members are always welcome to the group.

September Readings and Psalm**September 7 – 13th Sunday after Pentecost**

- Deuteronomy 30:15-20
Walk in the way of life and hold fast to God
- Jeremiah 18:1-11 (alternate)
Like a potter, the Lord will reshape Israel
- Psalm 1
They are like trees planted by streams of water
- Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18 (alternate)
You have searched me out and known me
- Philemon 1:21
Paul says: Receive Onesimus as a coworker
- Luke 14:25-33
Jesus says: Disciples, give up your possessions and carry the cross

September 14 – Holy Cross Day

- Numbers 21:4b-9
Moses lifts up a bronze serpent in the wilderness
- Psalm 98:1-4
The Lord has done marvelous things
- Psalm 78:1-2, 34-38 (alternate)
God was their rock and the Most High God their redeemer
- 1 Corinthians 1:18-24
The cross is the power of God to those who are being saved
- John 3:13-17
The Son of Man will be lifted up

September 21 – 15th Sunday after Pentecost

- Amos 8:4-7
Warnings to those who trample on the needy and poor
- Jeremiah 8:18—9:1 (alternate)
The Lord laments over Judah
- Psalm 113
The Lord lifts up the poor from the ashes
- Psalm 79:1-9 (alternate)
Deliver us and forgive us our sins, for your name's sake
- 1 Timothy 2:1-7
One God, one mediator—Christ Jesus—who gave himself for all people
- Luke 16:1-13
A shrewd manager: faithful in little, faithful in much; serving God/wealth

September 28 – 16th Sunday after Pentecost

- Amos 6:1a, 4-7
Warnings to those who are comfortable or wealthy
- Jeremiah 32:1-3a, 6-15 (alternate)
Jeremiah buys a field
- Psalm 146
The Lord gives justice to those who are oppressed
- Psalm 91:1-6, 14-16 (alternate)
You are my refuge and my stronghold, my God in whom I put my trust
- 1 Timothy 6:6-19
Eager to be rich or eager to pursue richness of God's justice?
- Luke 16:19-31
Story of poor Lazarus and the wealthy man

Thought for the month. . .

"And he said to them, 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.'
Luke 9:23



Upcoming worship opportunities:

September 7 – God's
Work Our Hands
September 14 – Holy
Cross Sunday

September 21 – Of the Land and
Seasons

September 24 – Tower Moments
Wednesday Worship Service



*Serving Christ by Serving
Others*

ALTAR/ORGAN FLOWERS

Here is a list of flowers
available. Please sign up on the
boards in the lounge.

Altar dates available:

October 26, November 30

Organ dates available:

October 12, 19, 26

November 2, 16, 23, 30

Sign-up boards are available for
reserving your flower requests. The charts
are located on the wall in the Lounge area.
You can sign up on the boards but please
notify the church office that you reserved a
date. Or you can call the church office and
reserve the date you want.

One board is for Altar Flowers - \$40.
(If there are 2 listings on the same day,
the flowers are only \$20) the other is
Organ Flowers - \$30. Payment will be due on
or before the date you have chosen. Thank
you!



*Musicians Welcome
Sing to the Lord!*

*September marks the return of our
choir leading worship and providing
special music in the service. Choir
members are an important part of our
ministry, and we invite you to be a
part of that ministry. Rehearsals are
before and after church on Sundays.
Singers are also provided with practice
tracks to rehearse at home. A love of
singing and willingness to learn the
music is all that is required.*

*Consider joining the choir this fall and
sing to the Lord.*

*See Howard or Kim if you have an
interest.*



Bell rehearsals begin Sept. 9

The bell choir will resume rehearsal
at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 9,
The choir performs with handbells
and chimes at about six services a
year.

The group is at its usual strength
but would welcome another
member to play regularly or fill in
as a substitute.

If you are interested, talk to
George Fattman, the director.



To all those that helped to make the Strawberry Festival and Outdoor Service such a wonderful time of music, food, fellowship, and worship!!

To Annie Hayes' friend, Paul Mikkelsen who repaired the pouring chalice for us! It looks beautiful!!!

Thank you to all those who helped make the Joint service possible and for those who attended the first Joint Worship Service at Benscreek! Thank you to those who brought their "goodies" for all to enjoy!! We are looking forward to the next one!!

ATTENTION!!! Clean up help needed!!

Vicki and Fawn are meeting on Thursday, September 4th at 9:00 am to begin the process of cleaning the Sanctuary for worship.

If you would like to help – please grab your vacuum to clean pew cushions. We will be dusting and cleaning the cushions in an effort to return to the Sanctuary.

Noon recitals resume Oct. 7

Four programs are scheduled for Tuesday noon recitals, beginning Oct. 7.

The exact schedule was not ready in time for this story, but these are the programs.

Alex Price Trio. *The return of a highly popular program.*

Irish Pretenders. *This band plays rousing renditions of popular Irish melodies.*

Rich Kingera, piano, and Bob Bretz, guitar. *Easy listening.*

Darlene Seals and Devon Haselrig *present a big Gospel sound. One of our best-attended programs.*

Lunch follows each program. There is no charge because the series is completely funded by foundations and individual donations.

Each program will be repeated at an area assisted-living center, thanks to a grant from the 1889 Foundation.

Funding also comes from Thrivent Financial.

Attendance has been growing. At some programs it reached 135.

SNACKS FOR SENIORS

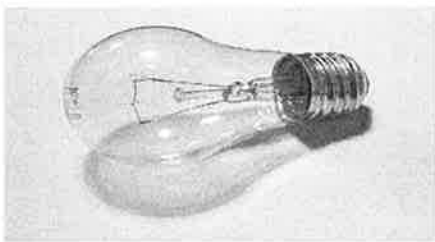
Did you know that some nursing homes do not provide snacks to their residents? Individuals living there must supply their own. This can be challenging for residents who do not have family or friends nearby to assist with providing snacks.

As part of our **God's Work, Our Hands Sunday**, we will be collecting snack items to be distributed to area nursing homes. Many of these items are similar to what we gather for our backpack program.

Items requested include:

- Small individual bags of crackers, cookies, nuts, chips, and pretzels.
- Individual cups of low or no-sugar added applesauce and fruits.
- Small (4-pack) sizes of peanut butter or cheese crackers.
- Individual bags of fruit snacks.

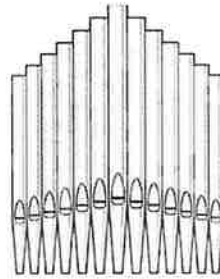
Items will be collected in the lounge and in the social hall. Join us on **God's Work our Hands Sunday, September 7th** to help sort the items and also make LWR school kits.



Wanted: Ideas

The Fundraising Committee is looking for new fundraising ideas. In the past, we've held silent auctions, raffles, and bake sales. We would love to hear from you about any suggestions for future events to support.

Watch for suggestion boxes in the lounge and social hall. Remember, all proceeds from our activities *benefit our church and outside causes.*



ORGAN PROJECT
UPDATE

Organ Console Update

Sunday services will return to the sanctuary on September 7. Those in attendance will be very aware of the gaping hole in the choir loft wall and that the organ console has been removed. It took most of an entire week for Mark Steiner and his crew to disassemble the organ console and a number of related components. The collection of parts was moved to the Steiner workshop in Cumberland, MD. At the workshop the console will be refurbished and electronically updated. The work is tedious as every key and every stop will be adapted to solid state electronic action.

One question that I have heard concerns the organ pipes. The pipes will play as they always have. We will still have one of the finest pipe organs in Johnstown. The work being done concerns the console where the organist sits, the keyboards, drawknobs, and the combination action. If you have questions about the organ project, please ask. I enjoy the opportunity to explain our special instrument.

Kim Rauch

Strawberry Festival 2025 -



Sunday Hospitality/Coffee Hour



We are all looking forward to resuming the Sunday Coffee Hour following the 11:00 service. Hospitality will start again on September 14. A sign-up sheet will be available on the table in the lounge for those who wish to host a Sunday. Nothing fancy is expected. Just a light refreshment while we gather with our First Lutheran family and friends.

See you on September 14!!

Volunteer Page - Month of September
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ALTAR GUILD**Saturday**

- 6 Fawn Slonka and Donna Kovalchek
- 13 Annie Hayes and Carol Massingill
- 20 Annie Hayes and Carol Massingill
- 27 Fawn Slonka and Donna Kovalchek

Sunday

- 7 Greer Koeller, Caryl Swanson, Nancy Turner
- 14 Vicki Price, Patty Schrott, Caryl Swanson, Nancy Turner
- 21 Carol Allison, Vicki Price, Caryl Swanson, Nancy Turner
- 28 Carol Allison, Greer Koeller, Vicki Price, Caryl Swanson

ACOLYTES

- 7 Ushers
- 14 Ushers
- 21 Ushers
- 28 Ushers

COMMUNION ASSISTANT

- 7 Josh Rinaman
- 14 Vicki Price
- 21 Jody Kirk
- 28 Barry Critchfield

LECTORS

- 6* George Fattman
- 7 Josh Rinaman
- 13* Joel Hoshaw
- 14 Abby Savering
- 20* Heidi Staib
- 21 Jody Kirk
- 27* Vicki Price
- 28 Ann Furlong

Saturdays*SATURDAY PIANISTS**

- 6 George Fattman
- 13 Joel Hoshaw
- 20 Heidi Staib (OLAS)
- 27 Vicki Price

SOUND

- 7 Rob Abele
- 14 Calvin Anderson
- 21 Bill Grubb
- 28 Rob Abele

VIDEO

- 7 Bill Hargreaves
- 14 Bill Weible
- 21 Rob Abele
- 28 Bill Grubb


TOWER BELLS

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

COUNCIL GREETER – William Price**FLOWER DELIVERY**– Rob Abele

September 2025

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 7 Pentecost 13 God's Work Our Hands 11:00-Word & Sacrament Noon – GWOH Celebration	1 Labor Day – Office Closed	2	3	4	5	6 Pentecost 13 5:00-Word & Sacrament
14 Holy Cross Day 11:00-Word & Sacrament Noon - Hospitality	8 11:00 Staff Meeting 11:45 Communion 12 Prayer Meeting	9 6:30 Bell Choir 6:30 Bible Study 7:30 pm Council	10 Vicar Christy on vacation	11	12	13 Holy Cross Day 5:00-Word & Sacrament
21 Pentecost 15 11:00-Word & Sacrament Of the Land and Seasons - Fall Noon - Hospitality	15 11:00 Staff Meeting 11:45 Communion 12 Prayer Meeting Vicar Christy at Bishops Convo	16 6:30 Bell Choir	17	18 7:00 pm Johnstown Conference Meeting for Assembly – St. David's Lutheran	19	20 Pentecost 15 5:00- Word & Sacrament Of the Land & Seasons - Fall
28 Pentecost 16 11:00-Word & Sacrament Noon - Hospitality	22 11:00 Staff Meeting 11:45 Communion 12 Prayer Meeting 6:30 pm Joint Worship & Music at FLC	23 6:30 Bell Choir 6:30 Bible Study 12-VSJ Deadline	24 11:00 am Tower Moments Worship Service	25	26	27 Pentecost 16 5:00-Word & Sacrament
	29 11:00 Staff Meeting 11:45 Communion 12 Prayer Meeting.	30 6:30 Bell Choir	31			