

Vine Street Journal

Johnstown, PA

First Lutheran Church

October 2025

A message from Vicar Christy...

"We are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone." Martin Luther

Once again, we enter the season of Fall—a time of change. The leaves begin their vibrant transformation into hues of red, orange, and gold. The air turns a little cooler, stirring in us a desire for cozy evenings by the fire, warm mountain pies, and maybe even a few s'mores.

Recently, I had the opportunity to spend three days at Camp Sequanota for the Bishop's Convocation. It was a gift to be immersed in nature—in God's creation. Walking through the woods, sharing conversations with colleagues, it was a time of reflection and renewal.

But even in these moments of peace, I am reminded of those who do not share the same comforts many of us enjoy: a roof over their heads, a warm bed, or even a place at the table to share a meal.

At Churchwide Assembly, we learned about many organizations doing powerful work to care for those in need—both here and around the world. As part of the ELCA, we are blessed with a network of partner ministries that respond when people are hurting, including when we ourselves are in need.

One of those partner ministries is ELCA World Hunger. Nearly 1 in 10 people globally, 733 million—suffer from hunger. ELCA World Hunger responds by working through congregations in the U.S., Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and global partners to address the root causes of hunger and poverty.

The challenge is great. Around 700 million people live in extreme poverty worldwide. In the U.S. alone, 18 million people face food insecurity. Rising housing costs and the effects of climate change only deepen these hardships. Yet we've also seen what can make a difference, like the temporary expansion of the Child Tax Credit during the pandemic, which showed how effective advocacy can reduce poverty.

So, as we move deeper into this season of reflection and gratitude, let's also roll up our sleeves. Let's continue to walk alongside our neighbors in need—through prayer, partnership, and service. We are the hands and feet of Christ in this world. Together, we can make a difference.

Yours in Christ,

Vicar Christy

FESTIVAL CHOIR – we will be having a Festival Choir for Vicar Christy's ordination. Please see Kim if you wish to join the choir. More information forthcoming.



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FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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+ + +

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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.



Next Journal Deadline

Tuesday

October 21st, 2025

Share your news with us!

~ PASTORAL ACTS ~

Pastor Mark Fischer
Funeral Service Karen Simons
09/12/25

~ CONTRIBUTIONS ~

CHURCH PRESERVATION FUND

*Kathryn Fritz -I.M.O Thomas Fritz
Tracy Fritz -I.M.O Husband Thomas Fritz
Barbara Pingatore -I.M.O John A. Kiser
Donna Caprous
Greer Koeller
Caryl Swanson
Barry A. Critchfield
Ann Furlong
Jane Hanechak
Richard & Patricia Schrott
Lance & Debbie Shomo
Nancy Turner
Donald & Beverly Brocius
Albert Johnson
Harriet Miller
Barbara Penrod*

SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION

*Barbara Pingatore -I.M.O Susan Dietz
Barbara Pingatore -Donation To Bell & Chimes
Choir
George & Anne Fattman -I.M.O Karen Simons
Caryl Swanson -I.M.O Karen Simons*

ORGAN RESTORATION

Barbara Pingatore -I.M.O Dorothy Anderson

Blanket Offering

*Vicki Price
Richard & Patricia Schrott
Anonymous
Anonymous*



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 Simon's family on the death of Karen.

Income and Expense Summary as of July 31, 2025

	Current YTD Actual Jan. 1 thru Aug. 31, 2025	Current YTD Budget Jan. 1 thru Aug. 31, 2025	Difference over+/under- Budget
Regular Offering Income	\$99,789.56	\$108,926.77	-\$9,137.21
Trust Fund Income	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other Income	\$2,132.00	\$2,089.00	\$43.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$101,921.56	\$111,015.77	-\$9,094.21
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$112,756.02	\$118,967.60	-\$6,211.58

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; however, *we will continue to mail to our shut-ins.*

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 September 9, at 7:30 pm to review reports and conduct new business.

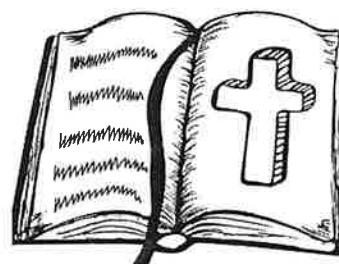
Fawn Slonka and Shirley Waclo will represent First Lutheran as voting members at the Allegheny Synod assembly this October.

The Property committee reports that the detailed painting in the sanctuary should be completed within the week. The scaffolding will be removed at the convenience of the company.

First has been awarded a \$1000 grant from the United Lutheran Seminary's Feast of Abundance drawing. It is to be used as a community dinner before December 25, 2025. Watch for details of the event planned for early December.

Learning & Youth reported on their start of the Sunday School, and we are looking forward to Vacation Bible School next summer—the first in years!

The next regular council meeting will be held Wednesday October 8, 2025, at 7:00 pm.



TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY

The Tuesday Bible Study has resumed. We are taking an in-depth look at *The Lord's Prayer*. The study is 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.

October Readings and Psalm**October 5 – 17th Sunday after Pentecost**

- Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4
Wicked surround the righteous; wait for the Lord
- Psalm 37:1-9
Commit your way to the Lord; put your trust in the Lord
- Psalm 137 (alternate)
Remember the day of Jerusalem, O Lord
- 2 Timothy 1:1-14
Guard the treasure entrusted to you: faith and love in Christ
- Luke 17:5-10
Faith the size of a mustard seed

October 12 – 18th Sunday after Pentecost

- 2 Kings 5:1-3, 7-15c
Naaman washes in the Jordan and is cleansed
- Psalm 111
I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart
- 2 Timothy 2:8-15
If we die with Christ, we will live with Christ
- Luke 17:11-19
One leper made clean by Jesus gives thanks to God

October 19 – 19th Sunday after Pentecost

- Genesis 32:22-31
Jacob's struggle with the angel: I'll not let go until you bless me
- Psalm 121
My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth
- 2 Timothy 3:14—4:5
In the presence of Christ the judge, proclaim the message
- Luke 18:1-8
The widow begs for justice; God grants justice to those who cry to him

October 26 – Reformation Sunday

- Jeremiah 31:31-34
I will write my law in their hearts, says the Lord
- Psalm 46
The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold
- Romans 3:19-28
Justified by God's grace as a gift
- John 8:31-36
Jesus says, Continue in my word and you will know the truth

Thought for the month. . .

"We are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone."

Martin Luther



Upcoming worship opportunities:

October 5 – Feast of St. Francis & Blanket Sunday.

October 22 – Tower

Moments Wednesday Worship Service.

October 26 – Reformation Sunday

Wear RED!!



Baby Shower for Beginnings Baby

Boutique: We will be collecting donations for New Beginnings

from October 1 until the Baby Shower on November 2. We are asking for new or clean, gently used donations of: clothing (sizes preemie – 6T); baby supplies such as diapers, wipes, bottles, etc; toys and books for young children. A crib will be in the lounge for your donations or bring them to the Baby Shower.



LITTLE LIBRARIES...

Just a friendly reminder that we continue to support the Little Libraries at the Johnstown YMCA and

Johnstown YWCA. We are always accepting donations of: Children's and adult books, snacks, winter items (such as mittens, hats, and other warm gear). Your generosity helps ensure everyone in our community has access to books, nourishment, and warmth – especially as those cold, winter months approach.



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:

November 30

Organ dates available:

October 12, 19

November 2, 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!



Sunday Hospitality/Coffee Hour

Hospitality has resumed and we are all looking forward to seeing you all at Sunday Coffee Hour following the 11:00 service. 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.



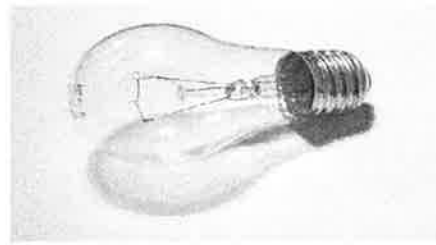
The generosity of First Lutherans reaches beyond our church walls, into the community, the church at large and globally. We receive notes of thanks and Acknowledgements for many of the gifts given. Acknowledgements received are noted each month in the VSJ and posted on a bulletin board located in the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

To All the volunteers that cleaned the church on September 4th and helped prepare for God's Work our Hands Sunday. Fawn Slonka, Vicki Price, Jessica Boring, John Kiser, Jody Kirk, Karen Bennett, Barry Critchfield, Caryl Swanson, Greer Koeller, and Dick Schrott.

We spent 2 hours, and accomplished so much! The Church Looked beautiful, and we were all set for GWOH Sunday.

From Deb Druzak and P.C. Staff at Heritage Ridge

Thank you all at First Lutheran Church for all the help and snacks you give us for our residents. God Bless you All! Everything you do is always very much appreciated. Our Residents look so forward to the Tuesday Noon Recital. Thank you all for all your hard work.



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.*





Recitals to resume with fiddle tunes

The Alex Price Trio returns October 6 with the first of four Tuesday noon recitals.

Alex will be joined by Carl Rahkonen and Aaron Work in a program of 18th and 19th Century American fiddle tunes. This year they'll repeat their program at Windber Woods.

On October 14 Irish Pretenders will play Celtic songs.

October 21's program is Deja Vu -- Bob Bretz, guitar, and Rich Kingera, piano. Their songs are popular standards. The program will be repeated at Laurel View.

On October 28 Darlene Seals and Devon Haselrig will present music from the Gospel tradition. They will repeat their program at the Villa at Napoleon Place.

The run-out programs are financed by a grant from the 1889 Foundation.

The recitals are followed by lunch at 12:35 p.m. Because the series has been pre-funded by donations and also grants from the 1889 Foundation and Thrivent Financial, there is no charge. Any new donations will go toward next year's recital series.

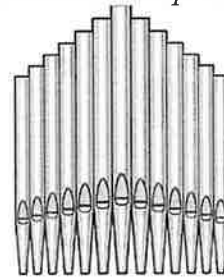
Stewardship drive begins this month

First Lutherans will be asked to pledge time, talent and money toward next year's ministry.

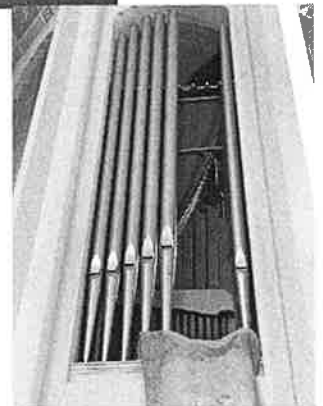
Pledge forms will be mailed in mid-October.

"Growing our faith through generosity" is the theme.

"God's work here depends on our generosity," said George Fattman, stewardship emphasis chair. "And I want to emphasize that time and talent are at least as important as cash gifts, even more so because our leaders continue to cut expenses. God has plenty for us to do. Some people don't pledge, but those who do help the council to plan for next year. That's the whole idea of our stewardship emphasis."



ORGAN PROJECT UPDATE





GODS WORK. OUR HANDS.

A big Thank You to all who made this year's God's Work Our Hands day a wonderful experience. First of all, thank you to all who contributed to the three projects; school kits, personal hygiene kits and the snacks for senior living establishments. We received this note from Caryl Swanson who delivered the snacks:

Many thanks for the snacks for Heritage Ridge. Over 300 snacks were delivered to each side of the home. That is 600 altogether! The staff was very happy to get them.

Also we appreciated all who prepared and served a delicious lunch prior to the packing of the kits and snacks.



Volunteer Page - Month of October

ALTAR GUILD**Saturday**

- 4 Annie Hayes and Carol Massingill
 11 Fawn Slonka and Donna Kovalchek
 18 Fawn Slonka and Donna Kovalchek
 25 Annie Hayes and Carol Massingill

Sunday

- 5 Carol Allison, Greer Koeller, Vicki Price,
Caryl Swanson
 12 Carol Allison, Greer Koeller,
Patty Schrott, Caryl Swanson
 19 Carol Allison, Greer Koeller,
Patty Schrott, Caryl Swanson
 26 Carol Allison, Greer Koeller, Vicki Price,
Caryl Swanson

ACOLYTES

- 5 Ushers
 12 Ushers
 19 Ushers
 26 Ushers

COMMUNION ASSISTANT

- 5 Bill Hargreaves
 12 Barry Critchfield
 19 Tom Roberts
 26 Jody Kirk

LECTORS

- 4* Vicki Price
 5 Bill Hargreaves
 11* Heidi Staib
 12 Anne Fattman
 18* George Fattman
 19 Tom Roberts
 25* Joel Hoshaw
 26 James & Josie Hill

*Saturdays

SATURDAY PIANISTS

- 4 Vicki Price
 11 Heidi Staib
 18 George Fattman
 25 Joel Hoshaw

SOUND

- 5 Calvin Anderson
 12 Harry Bennett
 19 Chuck Staib
 26 Rick Blackford

VIDEO

- 5 Bill Price
 12 Bill Hargreaves
 19 Bill Weible
 26 Rob Abele

TOWER BELLS

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

COUNCIL GREETER – Richard Schrott

FLOWER DELIVERY– Shirley Waclo

October 2025

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>				
			1	2	3	4 Pentecost 17 5:00 – Word and Sacrament Feast of St. Francis – Blessing of the Animals 6:00 – Congregational Meeting
5 17 th Sunday after Pentecost 10:45 – Sunday School 11:00 – Word and Sacrament/Bells Feast of St. Francis – Blessing of the Animals. Blanket Sunday 12:00 – Congregational Meeting Noon-Hospitality	6 11:00 Staff Meeting 11:45 Communion 12 Prayer Meeting.	7 Noon – Tuesday Noon Recital 6:30 Bell Choir	8 7:00 Council	9 2 Johnstown Conf. Meeting	10	11 Pentecost 18 5:00- Word and Sacrament
12 18 th Sunday after Pentecost 10:45- Sunday School 11:00- Word and Sacrament Noon-Hospitality	13 11:00 Staff Meeting 11:45 Communion 12 Prayer Meeting.	14 Noon – Tuesday Noon Recital 6:30 Bell Choir 6:30 Bible Study	15 10 Laurel High. Conf. Meeting	16	17	18 Pentecost 19 5:00- Word and Sacrament
19 19 th Sunday after Pentecost 10:45-Sunday School 11:00- Word and Sacrament GWOH Blessing Noon-Hospitality	20 11:00 Staff Meeting 11:45 Communion 12 Prayer Meeting	21 VSJ Deadline Noon – Tuesday Noon Recital 6:30 Bell Choir	22 11:00 Tower Moments	23 6:00 pm Voting Class for Synod Assembly by Zoom	24	25 Reformation 5:00- Word and Sacrament
26 Reformation Sunday 10:45- Sunday School 11:00- Word and Sacrament Noon-Hospitality	27 11:00 Staff Meeting 11:45 Communion 12 Prayer Meeting.	28 Noon – Tuesday Noon Recital. 1:15 TNR Mtg 6:30 Bell Choir 6:30 Bible Study	29	30	31 8 am – 5 pm Synod Assembly	11/1 8:30 am – 1 pm Synod Assembly
Vicar Christy in Gettysburg	for Colloquy —————→					