

Vine Street Journal

Johnstown, PA

First Lutheran Church

July 2026

A message from Pastor Christy...

"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1)

July is a season of growth. Gardens are flourishing, fields are maturing, and the beauty of God's creation reminds us that our lives are like seeds sown in the earth.

A seed appears small and insignificant. Buried beneath the soil, it may even seem dormant or lifeless. Yet within that tiny seed is the promise of new life. By God's design, what is hidden emerges, what seems inactive begins to grow, and what appears dead brings forth an abundant harvest.

So, it is with our faith. There are seasons when we cannot see God's work in our lives. We may face uncertainty, loss, or challenges that leave us wondering where God is at work. Yet we cling to God's promises – the Lord is at work even when we cannot see it.

Through faith, we trust that God is always with us. Just as that seed grows in due time, so our faith and love in Christ are continually being nurtured by his grace. That same grace that calls us to faith continues shaping our lives, producing fruit – love, service, and hope – in ways we may not always notice right away.

As I look forward to my installation as your pastor, I am reminded of this same promise. Together, we begin a new chapter, trusting that God is already at work in and among us. We may not yet see all that God has in store for us, but we move forward in faith, confident that he will continue to nurture us and bring forth fruit in our shared life in Christ.

This July, as you watch gardens bloom and crops grow, remember that God's promises are always at work. Even from what appears to be small, dormant, or dead, God brings forth life. With humble hearts, we place our hope and trust in him.

May God bless you this season – with steadfast faith, abundant grace, and joyful hope – today and in the days ahead.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Christy

Sharing of Recipes:

Coconut Cake

1 Box Yellow Cake Mix
1 Box Instant Vanilla Pudding
1 1/3 C. Water
4 Eggs
1/4 C. Oil

Mix well. Beat 2 minutes.
Then add: 2 C. Coconut and 1 C. Pecans.

Bake cake according to package directions.

Icing:

8 oz. Cream Cheese
Mix with 2 C. Coconut and Vanilla Flavoring.



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Published by the
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

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

*Barry Critchfield
Richard and Patricia Schrott
Nancy Turner
Greer Koeller
Harriett Miller
Debbie and Lance Shomo
Luis Gonzalez
Ann Furlong
Jane Hanechak
William and Susan Hartland*

SPECIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

*In memory of Barbara Pingatore
Robert and Stephanie Johnson, George and Anne Fattman, George and Sally Winder Jr, Kathleen J. Heider, Raymond A Gaydos, Fawn Slonka, Jane Hanechak, Jody Kirk, John M Costello, Jr, Susan Costello Lorditch, Margaret Costello Plank, Amy Costello Suhr, and Georgina Costello.*



Next Journal Deadline

Tuesday
July 21, 2026

Share your news with us!



NEW SUMMER CHURCH OFFICE HOURS –

Monday – Thursday 9:00 am – 2:30 pm.
FRIDAY – 9:00 am – 12:00 pm (please note CHANGE of hours)

**Income and Expense Summary
as of May 31, 2026**



	Current YTD Actual Jan. 1 thru Apr. 30, 2026	Current YTD Budget Jan. 1 thru Apr. 30, 2026	Difference over+/under- Budget
Regular Offering Income	\$65,009.09	\$62,824.19	\$2,184.90
Trust Fund Income	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other Income	\$2,291.34	\$1,187.46	\$1,103.88
TOTAL INCOME	\$67,301.24	\$64,011.65	\$3,289.59
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$88,442.41	\$76,162.17	\$12,280.24

The Church Council met on June 10, 2026. Of note: The Tuesday Noon Recital series for the month of July will also visit local Nursing Homes after the Tuesday luncheons. These will include Laurel View Village, Heritage Ridge, Horizon Villa Crest, and Siemans in Somerset. Offerings for the month of May 2026 \$11,738.00, which was 130% of amount budgeted for the month, and is 100.58% for the year to date. The church is required by city inspector to repair the rain spouting on the side towards the Pasquerella building. This will be completed when Raimondo Construction completes inspecting the roof.

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

There will be a council meeting on July 8, 2026, at 7:00pm.

The next regular council meeting will be August 26, 2026, at 7:00 pm.

REMINDER...

Beginning Sunday, July 5, 2026 - Sunday worship services will be held in the Fellowship Hall. We look forward to worshipping together.



Upcoming worship opportunities:

July 2 – Bell Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm

July 5 – Joint Choir Rehearsal Noon

July 7, 14, 21, 28 – Tuesday Noon Recitals.

July 9 – Bell Choir Rehearsal, 6:30pm.

July 12 – Joint Choir Rehearsal 1:30 pm; Bell Choir Rehearsal 2:00pm followed by **Pastor Christy Harford’s Installation Service** is at 3:00 pm, Benscreek Lutheran Church

July Readings and PsalmJuly 5th – 6th Sunday after Pentecost

- **Zechariah 9:9-12**
The king will come in humility and peace
- **Psalm 145:8-14**
The LORD is gracious and full of compassion.
- **Romans 7:15-25a**
The struggle within the self
- **Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30**
The yoke of discipleship

July 12th – 7th Sunday after Pentecost

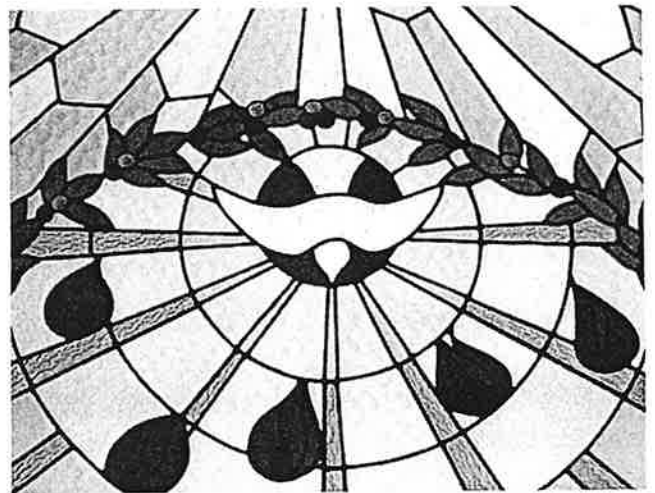
- **Isaiah 55:10-13**
The growth of the word to accomplish God's purpose
- **Psalm 65: [1-8] 9-13**
Your paths overflow with plenty.
- **Romans 8:1-11**
Live according to the Spirit
- **Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23**
The parable of the Sower and the seed

July 19 – 8th Sunday after Pentecost

- **Isaiah 44:6-8**
There is no other God than the LORD
- **Wisdom of Solomon 12:13,16-19 (alternate)**
God's sovereignty: both righteous and forbearing
- **Psalm 86:11-17**
Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth.
- **Romans 8:12-25**
The revealing of the children of God
- **Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43**
The parable of the weeds

July 26th – 9th Sunday after Pentecost

- **1 Kings 3:5-12**
Solomon's prayer for wisdom
- **Psalm 119:129-136**
When your word is opened, it gives light and understanding.
- **Romans 8:26-39**
Nothing can separate us from God's love
- **Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52**
Parables of the reign of heaven



The Life of the Congregation

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.

*+We ask for prayers of **Carol Massingill** as she prepares to move to Pittsburgh to be closer to family.*

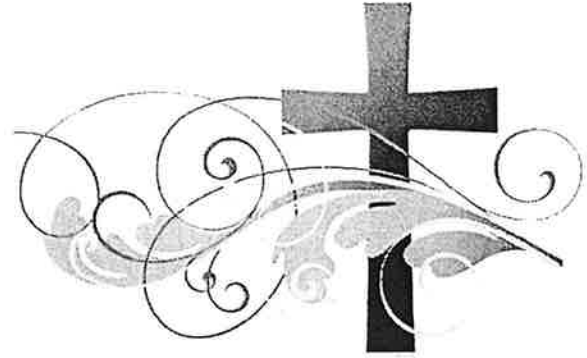
*+We send thanks and Godspeed to **Danny Mitchell** as she prepares to move closer to family.*

We joyfully welcome **Stella Mae Barbus, Magnolia Louise Mennetti, and Ivy Reign Steele** into the family of God through Holy Baptism.

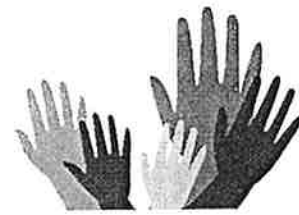
Welcome New Members!

On June 28, 2026, we warmly welcomed eight new members to our congregation. Congratulations!

Carolyn Anderson
Kathy Howanek
Hunter McDermot
Erin Mennetti
Barbara Miltenberger
Robert Miltenberger
Samantha Smith



Installation Service for Rev. Christy Harford will be Sunday, July 12, 2026, at Benscreek Lutheran Church at 3:00p.m.



Friday Helping Hands

We are excited to launch "Friday Helping Hands," held on the third Friday of each month from 9am to 11am. This is a wonderful opportunity for fellowship as we work together to care for our sanctuary. Tasks will include dusting the altar and woodwork, polishing silver, straightening hymnals, and replenishing pew holders.

There is no need to sign up—if you are available, please just come and join us!

Thanks,
 Fawn

*Thank
You*

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 Lounge.

“Thank you for your gift of \$221.00 to ELCA World Hunger.” – The Rev. Daniel Rift, Director, Congregational Generosity

Dear Church Family,

I want to express my gratitude to everyone for all the support and guidance during my transition into Church Secretary. Especially, I want to thank Danny Mitchell for her time and patience in training me and for the friendship we have formed through this experience. I’m deeply grateful for this new opportunity to learn, grow and prepare for the calling God has for me. I know I am in good hands, and I’m blessed to be able to serve God, our community, and our family here at First Lutheran. – Jessica

Johnstown Walk of Hope

The First Lutheran Walkers would like to thank everyone who contributed to the **Walk of Hope**. We are pleased to announce that we exceeded our goal of \$1,000.00 through sponsorships, the daffodil sale, t-shirts, and the noisy offering. The total count for donations is still being determined, but as of this writing, First Lutheran Walkers rank #13. This was our 10th year participating in the event. Our group included walkers from all age categories, and we are especially grateful to the new members who joined us this year. It is our hope that even more walkers will join us in the years to come.

First Lutheran Walkers





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 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.

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.



Worship and Music Notes: July

Vicki Price

LOOKING AHEAD:

Of the Land and Seasons is July 5th through August 9th.

Outdoor Service is Saturday, August 8th.

Council will meet July 7th at 7:00p.m.

Baptism: July 12

THANK YOU

June Altar Guild: Caryl Swanson, Greer Koeller, Shirley Waclo, Vicki Price, Karen Bennett, Karen Hargreaves, Kathy Stephenson, Fawn Slonka, Donna Kovalchek, Annie Hayes.

To the **June pianists:** Heidi Staib, George Fattman, Vicki Price, and Linda Prozialeck. Joel Hoshaw for Accompanying on Sundays.

To the **Tower Bell Ringers:** Pastor Christy, George Fattman, Anne Fattman, Vicki Price, and Kim Rauch.

To **June Lectors:** Josh Rinaman, Vicki Price, JD Hill, Josie Hill, Jim Hargreaves, Tom Roberts, Heidi Staib, George Fattman, Joel Hoshaw, Linda Prozialeck, Fawn Slonka, in addition to Communion Assistants: Calvin Andersson, Shirley Waclo, and Jessica Boring.

Upcoming events:**Tuesday Noon Recitals — July 2026**

Amidst the fireworks and celebrations of the America 250 anniversary we will be celebrating with a wonderful series of Tuesday Noon Recitals in July. Our series features an Americana theme with a tribute to American music in each program. All our performers - instrumentalists and vocalists — will be making their Tuesday Noon Recital debut.

Performances are thirty minutes in length, beginning at noon and followed by a light luncheon. Both the concert and luncheon are offered free of charge, made possible through the generous support of individual donors, Thrivent Financial, and the 1889 Foundation. Each program will also be repeated at a local care facility later that afternoon.

Invite a friend to enjoy a musical afternoon and luncheon!

July 7 — Matthew Klumpp, Organ

The series opens with graduate organ performance major Matthew Klumpp, who will perform on the newly restored E. M. Skinner pipe organ in the church sanctuary. A student of Dr. Christine Clewell at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Matthew most recently performed at Westmont Presbyterian Church in Johnstown. His program will feature classical organ masterworks alongside compositions by American composer.

July 14 — Dylan Staib, Voice and Acoustic Guitar

A Johnstown native now residing in the Pittsburgh area, Dylan Staib will return to his hometown to offer a program of folk, country western, and gospel music. As a singer accompanying himself on acoustic guitar, Dylan's selections will draw naturally from the rich tradition of American musical heritage, featuring beloved favorites familiar to a wide audience.

July 21 — Andrew Mulligan, Trumpet and Flugelhorn

Andrew Mulligan, a trumpet performance major at Messiah College in Grantham, Pennsylvania, and a native of Ebensburg, brings more than a decade of performance experience to the series. A graduate of Central Cambria High School, Andrew participated in PMEA festivals and serves as principal trumpet of the Messiah College Orchestra. His program will include two movements from Haydn's celebrated Trumpet Concerto in E-flat major and "The Swan" by Camille Saint-Saëns. He will perform on both trumpet and flugelhorn, closing with George Gershwin's beloved "Someone to Watch Over Me" from the Great American Songbook.

July 28 — The Brunner Trio

The July series concludes with a captivating performance by three exceptionally talented siblings. Octavian (age 8), Cyrus (age 13), and Lillian (age 16) Brunner will present an eclectic program spanning opera to American musical theater. Octavian and Cyrus are members of Inclined to Sing, the Youth Chorus of the Johnstown Symphony Orchestra. Lillian has performed with the JSO Chorus and holds the distinction of being its youngest member. This past spring, all three siblings appeared in the CCCAC's production of *Oliver! Jr.* Under Lillian's guidance the Brunner Trio has created a program that highlights their remarkable range and artistry as young musicians.



Volunteer Page - Month of July

SATURDAY ALTAR GUILD

- 4 Fawn Slonka, Donna Kovalchek
 11 Annie Hayes
 18 Fawn Slonka, Donna Kovalchek
 25 Annie Hayes

COUNCIL GREETERS – Karen Hargreaves

FLOWER DELIVERY– Jim Hargreaves

ACOLYTES

- 7 Ushers
 14 Ushers
 21 Ushers
 28 Ushers

COMMUNION ASSISTANT

- 5 Barry Critchfield
 12 Dan Hill
 19 Jody Kirk
 26 Calvin Anderson

WORSHIP ASSISTANT

- 4 Fawn Slonka
 5 Jessica Boring
 11 Howard Bennett
 12 Dan Hill
 18 Jessica Boring
 19 Jody Kirk
 25 Josh Rinaman
 26 Abbie Savering

CANTOR

- 11 Howard Bennett
 18 Joel Hoshaw
 25 Josh Rinaman

LECTORS

- 4 Kim Rauch
 5* Vicki Price
 11 Howard Bennett
 12* Dan Hill
 18 Callie Bennear
 19* George Fattman
 25 Josh Rinaman
 26* Calvin Anderson
 *Saturdays

SATURDAY PIANISTS

- 4 Kim Rauch
 11 Heidi Staib
 18 Joel Hoshaw, Vicki Price
 25 Linda Prozialeck

VIDEO

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

TOWER BELLS

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Vicki Price | Sunday 5, 12, 19, 26 |
| Christy Harford | 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 |

Voices of Faith

I'M A LUTHERAN: DOUG BENNETT



Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Raleigh, N.C.

Head athletic trainer, Carolina Hurricanes Hockey Club

“**In 2012**, my then-girlfriend, now my wife, Shelley, and I visited multiple churches in the Raleigh area. We came from different church backgrounds but had similar wants in a church. After our first visit to Good Shepherd, we both were drawn to it and knew we wanted to connect more.

We are involved in many ways in and around Good Shepherd. We love the life-changing service theme that the church actively lives out. We enjoy volunteering for Family Promise, a charity for at-risk and homeless families, and Coffeehouse, a regularly offered evening of entertainment for all ages with an emphasis on adults with developmental delays. Our children are active in youth and cross-generational ministries as well as acolytes, and Shelley enjoys helping as a worship leader.

It's important to our family to find ways to connect with the gospel message. Whether that's hearing it preached from a pulpit—Good Shepherd has great sermons—or living it out through Jesus' call to love one another in the ministries they have available, there's something for everyone. Good Shepherd is a place of love and connection.

I entered college with an undecided major designation, and part of the requirement for that at Penn State [University in State College, Pa.] was that I attended regular sessions with an

adviser and walked through a journey to decide what path was best for me. Everything pointed toward my desire to help others in a health care setting and my love for sports. I was entered into an “Intro to Athletic Training” course, and the rest is history.

A typical day for me as head athletic trainer depends on the time of year and what's going on. There's the off-season, which is more administrative in nature. There's training camp, which is our longest days, with multiple groups practicing and intense training sessions. There are practice days. And then there are my favorite—game days.

Game day involves a morning skate, before which we complete the players' rehabilitation and therapy to prepare them for the day. Then, after they attend some meetings, we tape and brace them and make final preparations before they skate again. After the skate, we complete any postpractice treatments they need. Returning in the afternoon for the game, we go through a similar process to the morning, with the focus, obviously, being on preparing them to play.

During the game, I stand on the bench and triage any injuries that may occur. I prefer to be the guy behind the guy, who no one sees or recognizes, but occasionally I have to run onto the ice to assist an injured player, and I get to do my job very publicly. After the game, we finish up dealing with any new injuries and make a plan for the next day.

My job includes a lot of different aspects, from designing injury prevention strategies to evaluating musculoskeletal injuries and rehabilitation of injuries. I work very closely with our team physicians to coordinate all aspects of our players' medical care, from preparticipation medical exams to MD appointments to MRIs and advanced imaging. On the other end, I work with our strength and conditioning coach and team coaches as players return from injury to progress them [so they can] safely play.

I like the camaraderie of being a part of a team working toward our goals. Whether it's our specific sports medicine team working to return a player safely from injury or our whole Hurricanes team working toward winning the Stanley Cup, we're all pulling on the same rope and working together. It is really rewarding to see an athlete go from some of their lowest moments, when they're struggling with the reality of injury and missing the game they love, to help them through it, seeing them return to play and have success. Whether it's our sports medicine team working to return a player safely from injury or our whole Hurricanes team working toward winning the Stanley Cup, we're all working together.

I feel a calling to healthcare, and athletic training is a profession known for its dedication and care. I love the quote "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." I know if you polled my athletes, they'd tell you I'm one of the first people—if not the first person—they call when an emergency hits. I've taken calls in the middle of the night, including calls about family members who are sick or hurt, and I always pick up and get them the care they need.

I've enjoyed nearly everywhere I've been professionally. I've had the pleasure of working with UNC-Chapel Hill's baseball team that went to two College World Series, the Seattle Seahawks, the Philadelphia Eagles and now the Hurricanes. Making the playoffs and chasing a Stanley Cup with the Hurricanes are some of my best memories. The joy of winning a Game 7 or a playoff series is hard to describe. The satisfaction of seeing a player return from a major injury, knowing that we played a part in their return, [is a] special, private moment for me.

I don't get much free time, but when I do, I spend it with my family. I have a beautiful, loving wife who is incredibly supportive of my crazy schedule and travel, and I have two awesome kids, Sunny (9) and Carter (7), who I

just adore. In sports, music, plays or just hanging around, I treasure my time with them. And if there's any time left, I like to hit a small white ball around a large green field into 18 strategically placed holes.

I pray for my family. I pray that I can live out Jesus' example of love. In worship, I often hear a variation of prayers for things to be acceptable in God's sight. So I regularly pray, "I may not know what I'm doing, but I'm trying my best," and I know that's acceptable in God's sight.

Grace, to me, means praying, "I'm doing my best down here, God, and I'm confident that's acceptable to you. Guide me to be better each day." But I rest assured that God unconditionally loves me, no matter my faults.

I'm a Lutheran because of grace. I trust in God's mercy, grace and love wholeheartedly."

July 2026

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

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
			1	2 6:30 – Bell Choir Rehearsal	3	4 Pentecost 6 5:00 – Word & Sacrament
5 th Sunday after Pentecost 11:00 – Word & Sacrament 12:00 – Choir Rehearsal	6 11:00 – Staff Meeting 11:45 – Communion 12 – Prayer Meeting	7 Noon – Tuesday Noon Recital	8 7:00 – Council	9 6:30 – Bell Choir Rehearsal	10	11 Pentecost 7 5:00 – Word & Sacrament
12 th Sunday after Pentecost 11:00 – Word & Sacrament 1:30 – Joint Choir Rehearsal 2:00 – Bell Choir Rehearsal 3:00 – Installation Service at Benscreek	13 11:00 – Staff Meeting 11:45 – Communion 12 – Prayer Meeting	14 Noon – Tuesday Noon Recital VSJ Deadline	15	16	17	18 Pentecost 8 5:00 – Word & Sacrament
19 th Sunday after Pentecost 11:00 – Word & Sacrament	20 11:00 – Staff Meeting 11:45 – Communion 12 – Prayer Meeting	21 Noon – Tuesday Noon Recital	22	23	24	25 Pentecost 9 5:00 – Word & Sacrament
26 th Sunday after Pentecost 11:00 – Word & Sacrament	27 11:00 – Staff Meeting 11:45 – Communion 12 – Prayer Meeting	28 Noon – Tuesday Noon Recital	29	30	31	

“Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” Ephesians 6:11