

Vine Street Journal

Johnstown, PA

First Lutheran Church

October 2026

A message from Pastor Christy...

October Greetings,

There is something beautiful about October. The air grows crisp, the days become a little shorter, and the trees begin their annual transformation. Leaves that were once green turn brilliant shades of red, orange, and gold. Before long, they let go and gently fall to the ground.

As I look forward to those changing leaves, I am reminded that change is a natural part of God's creation. We often prefer things to remain familiar and comfortable. We know those words well: *"We have always done it that way"*. And sometimes there is wisdom in what is familiar, tried, and true. Yet the changing seasons remind us that God is present not only in times of stability, but also in times of change.

The leaves teach us another lesson: letting go can be an act of trust. A tree doesn't cling to every leaf forever. When the time comes, it releases the leaf it has been holding. In much the same way, there are times when God calls us to let go – to let go of an old worry, a past hurt, a disappointment, or maybe even something that we have held on to for far too long.

Letting go doesn't always come easily. We may wonder what will happen when we let go of what is familiar. Yet faith invites us to trust that God is already present in *"what comes next."* Sometimes God is leading us to a new place, a new opportunity, a new way of serving, or even to a new person who will become an important part of our lives.

And yet, the falling leaves are not a sign that the tree has ceased to live. Beneath the surface, life continues. The tree rests through the winter, preparing for the new growth that will come in spring.

Perhaps that is a good reminder for us as we enter another autumn. Even when we cannot see what God is doing, *God is still at work – in us and through us*. The seasons change. Circumstances change. We change – but one thing that does not change: the love and grace of God remain constant throughout our lives.

We are reminded, *"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven"* (Ecclesiastes 3:1). Each season has its own gifts, challenges, endings, and beginnings. October invites us to notice the season we are in, to give thanks for the beauty around us, and to trust that God will accompany us through every season of our lives.

So, as you walk beneath the colorful trees this month, take a moment to pause and look up. Give thanks for the beauty of God's creation. Give thanks for the people God has placed in your life. And if there is something you need to let go of, bring it to God in prayer and place it into God's hands.

The leaves may fall, but God's love and promises do not.

May this October be a season of gratitude, reflection, and renewed trust in God who holds us through every changing season.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Christy



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FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

415 Vine Street

Johnstown, PA 15901

Phone: 814-536-7521

Email: firstlutheran@wpia.net

Fax: 814-536-0855

WEB SITE ~ www.firstlutheran.info

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PASTOR

Christy Harford

MINISTER OF MUSIC

Kim Rauch

OFFICE MANAGER

CLEANER

Paul Eisenhuth

HOUSEKEEPER

Deborah Jones

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).

OFFICE HOURS

Monday – Friday 9:00 am – 2:00 pm.

~ PASTORAL ACTS ~

1st Holy Communion – Ben Kinsey

~ CONTRIBUTIONS ~

CHURCH PRESERVATION FUND

Barry Critchfield

Richard and Patricia Schrott

Caryl Swanson

Donna Caprous

Harriett Miller

Ann Furlong

Lance and Debbie Shomo

Nancy Turner

In memory of David Ott

Gifted by George and Ann Fattman

SPECIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

In memory of Jean Burr

Gifted by George and Amm Fattman

HELP WANTED

We are currently seeking a **secretary** for a part-time position of 25 hours per week, 9am to 2pm, Monday through Friday. Skills in Microsoft office, computer skills, receptionist duties, copying and printing bulletins and newsletters. Please sent resume to the church.



Next Journal Deadline

November 17, 2026
Share your news with us!

Income and Expense Summary as of August 31, 2026

	Current YTD Actual Jan. 1 thru August 31, 2026	Current YTD Budget Jan. 1 thru August 31, 2026	Difference over+/under- Budget
Regular Offering Income	\$98,083.14	\$94,566.68	\$3,516.46
Trust Fund Income	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other Income	\$2,341.34	\$1,899.96	\$441.38
TOTAL INCOME	\$100,424.48	\$96,466.64	\$3,957.84
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$128,151.65	\$121,139.40	\$7,012.25



Church Council News Treasurer Barry Critchfield presented the Treasurer's report of August 2026. Offerings total \$10,663.24 which is 86.86% for the year to date. YTD \$91,379.14 which is 102.67% of the budget. As one of the many service projects that the Outreach committee is working on the Family Kitchen Meal will occur on November 4th and 5th. We will prepare a meal on November 4th with help from the congregation. On November 5th the meal will be delivered and those who have signed up to help serve will go to the Family Kitchen and serve the meal. A signup list will be located in the Lounge and Social Hall for anyone who is interested in helping on either day. Next Meeting will be held On October 21st at 7pm



Upcoming worship opportunities:

October 1 - Chosen Series:

First Lutheran 6pm

October 3 – Pet Blessing Day: Serenity Garden 12:30pm

October 4 – Commemoration of St. Francis

October 16 – Friday Helping Hands 9-11

October 25 – Celebration of Reformation Day and Confirmation (Wear Red)

October 31 – All Saints Day (Wear White)

Friday Helping Hands Talk about a task...the Friday Helping Hands cleaned, dusted and vacuumed the balcony of the sanctuary of the church. To say the least there was a lot of dust but the tenacity of those who were able to come and lend their helping hands we were able to complete the task. A huge shout out to Rose Harford, Greer Koeller, Caryl Swanson and Fawn Slonka for a job well done. Next month's Helping Hands date is October 16th. We will see where the spirit moves us to. Suggestions are welcome along with any hands available to help.

October Readings and Psalms

October 4th – 19th Sunday after Pentecost

- **Isaiah 5:1-7**
The song of the vineyard
- **Psalms 80:7-15**
Look down from heaven, O God; behold and tend this vine.
- **Philippians 3:4b-14**
Nothing surpasses the value of knowing Christ
- **Matthew 21:33-46**
The parable of the vineyard owner's son.

October 25th – 22nd Sunday after Pentecost

- **Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18**
Holiness revealed in acts of justice
- **Psalms 1**
Their delight is in the law of the Lord.
- **1 Thessalonians 2:1-8**
The apostles tender care for the Thessalonians
- **Matthew 22:34-46**
Two great commandments: love for God and neighbor

October 11th – 20th Sunday after Pentecost

- **Isaiah 25:1-9**
The feast of victory
- **Psalms 23**
You prepare a table before me, and my cup is running over.
- **Philippians 4:1-9**
Rejoice in the Lord always
- **Matthew 22:1-14**
The parable of the unwelcome guest at the wedding feast

October 18th – 21st Sunday after Pentecost

- **Isaiah 45:1-7**
God's concern for the city of Nineveh
- **Psalms 96:1-9 [10-13]**
Ascribe to the Lord honor and power.
- **1 Thessalonians 1:1-10**
Thanksgiving for the church at Thessalonica
- **Matthew 22:15-22**
A teaching on giving to the emperor and to God

TUESDAY NOON RECITALS FOR OCTOBER

Not the “Sound of Silence” —The Tuesday Noon Recital Series at First Lutheran Church resumes this October with a lineup of music spanning the decades — from organ classics to the songs of the 1920s, popular standards, and jazz. The sanctuary will be alive with music this autumn.

October 6 — “The Golden Age of Song: Music by Irving Berlin and Cole Porter.”

Kim Rauch opens the series with songs by two of America’s wittiest early 20th-century songwriters. Kim will sing and play romantic and novelty songs, including “Don’t Fence Me In” and “Night and Day” by Cole Porter, and “They Say It’s Wonderful” by Irving Berlin.

October 13 — “Coco and Poglein Sing Simon and Garfunkel.” The duo of Sam Coco and Barry Poglein, longtime favorites of the Tuesday Noon Recital audience, perform songs that topped the charts in the 1960s, especially following the 1967 release of “The Graduate.” The program includes “Mrs. Robinson,” “The 59th Street Bridge Song (Feelin’ Groovy),” “Homeward Bound,” and more.

October 20 — Organist Kevin Clemens.

Clemens returns to the console of the recently restored 1922 E. M. Skinner pipe organ, performing works that highlight the instrument’s tonal resources. The program includes “Fanfare” by John Cook, “Festival Toccata” by Percy Fletcher, and two orchestral transcriptions for organ. Clemens is organist at St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church, Highland Park, Pittsburgh.

October 27 — Déjà Vu. The series closes with the keyboard-and-guitar duo of Rich Kingera (keyboards, vocals) and Bob Bretz (guitar). Drawing on a rich background in performance and teaching, the pair is well versed in jazz classics and contemporary tunes, with a program that includes “Unforgettable” and “As Time Goes By.”

About the Tuesday Noon Recital Series and Luncheons

Established in 1991, the Tuesday Noon Recital Series was created to provide musical enrichment for downtown workers and residents. Over its thirty-five-year history, the series has grown into a community institution, giving musicians and audiences alike the opportunity to share talent, celebrate the arts, and enjoy quality live performance. Don’t miss the delicious luncheons following each performance.

All programs and meals are offered free of charge through the generous support of individual donors, Thrivent Financial, and the 1889 Foundation. Each program has an outreach performance at a local care facility, made possible by the 1889 Foundation.

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We joyfully celebrated with the Kinsey family on Sunday, September 20, 2026, as Ben received his First Holy Communion. It was a beautiful and blessed occasion as family and friends gathered to celebrate this special milestone in his faith journey. We congratulate Ben and pray that he will continue to grow in faith.





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.

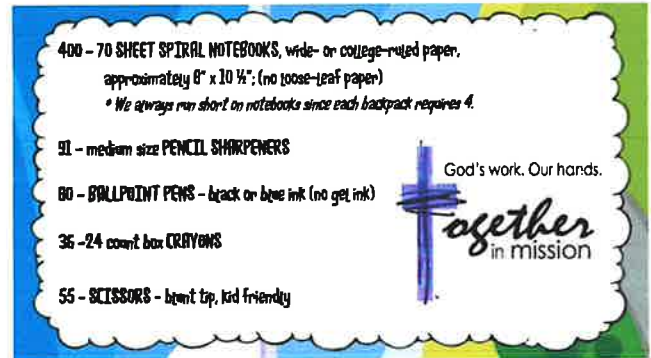
Thank you – First Lutheran Church Family, for the opportunity to serve as secretary these past few months. Serving in this way has helped me grow to know you all even more. During my time here, we have had the blessing of building meaningful and lasting relationships in Christ, and my family and I are truly grateful for the love and warmth you have shown us.

As difficult and uncomfortable as circumstances may be sometimes, we have a responsibility as Christians to faithfully go where God calls us. I am confident that, as we keep our eyes on Christ and follow where He leads, we will continue to serve Him and His Church with excellence and in unity with one another.

May God bless you all, and may He continue to guide us by His Spirit according to His will and to the glory of His holy name.

Jessica Boring

God's work Our hands School kits.



Thank you for everyone who contributed to God's Work Our Hands Sunday.

We packed 144 School Kits and 9 Personal Care Kits.

We had enough school supplies left to pack 3 boxes for the local Elementary Schools. This year we are giving to Richland, Johnstown, and Ferndale.

We also packed small blessing bags to distribute.

Blessings to all

Vicki Price



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.

Opportunities to Serve

Sponsorships

Bulletins Sponsorship & Tribune Democrat Sponsorship is available.

Coffee Hour for anyone interested in hosting. Sign-ups are in the Lounge

Friday Helping Hands is October 16th.

Cinnamon's Closet Donations will wrap up on October 18th.

Kids Closet

Look in the Bulletin and future Vine Street Journals for information regarding an ongoing project called "Kids Closet." It is to be a collection of school appropriate clothing for students in grades K through 12. As you clean out closets this fall keep in mind that we will be accepting donations for new or gently used kid's clothes. The immediate need is for boys' underwear and pants sizes 3t – 8 and girls' underwear and pants size 3t – 6.

FLOWERS for 2027

Altar and Organ flower listings will roll over to 2027. Please check your listings for accuracy. Charts are now on the table in the lounge along with the bulletins and ads. Check the charts and OK the listing if it is correct. Please leave us a note on the form provided for any changes. Also, let us know if you would like to take your flowers home or if you would like them to go to homebound members.

Thanks,
Vicki Price

Upcoming events:

Now Is the Time...

The adult choir will return
Sunday, September 13th.

Whether you've been a member for many years, or if you're new, and would like to get involved in something, how about the choir?

You follow the service and do the same thing with one exception; we sing a short anthem.

You do not need to read music, be especially trained, or have schooling in music. We hold a practice before Sunday service and go over that day's anthem. We also send you an email that plays out the music to assist your practice.

We are one of the few churches that still have a choir and hope to keep it that way. Give it some thought and if you have any questions, please give me a call or email me.

Phone-814-421-5429
email-taketimeandhurry13@gmail.com

The music is always available weeks early to look over, and if you would like extra brief practice, something can be set up for you.

Howard
Choir Director



Upcoming events:



BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

St. Francis Feast Day

For the Feast of St. Francis, we are excited to return to a blessing of the animals' service in our lovely Serenity Garden. We will gather with our pets at 12:30 on Saturday October 3. In recognition of the event, we will hold a collection of pet items to be donated to St Mark's Pet Food Pantry and to Cinnamon's Closet, an animal rescue mission in Cambria City. Most needed are food and treats but also pet toys and collars and leashes and other accessories are welcome.

So, bring your pups, cats, white mice and iguanas or whatever pet you love, and they can receive a blessing on October 3.

Volunteer Page - Month of October

SATURDAY ALTAR GUILD

3 Fawn Slonka, Donna Kovalchek
 10 Annie Hayes
 17 Fawn Slonka, Donna Kovalchek
 24 Annie Hayes
 31 Fawn Slonka, Donna Kovalchek

COUNCIL GREETERS – Richard Schrott**FLOWER DELIVERY– Shirley Waclo****COMMUNION ASSISTANT**

4 Dan Hill, Caryl Swanson
 11 Rick Blackford, Calvin Anderson
 18 Jim Hargreaves, Shirley Waclo
 25 Barry Critchfield, Abbie Saverling

WORSHIP ASSISTANT

3* Jessica Boring
 4 Dan Hill
 10* Tom Roberts
 11 Rick Blackford
 17* Jessica Boring
 18 Jim Hargreaves
 24* Vicki Price
 25 Abbie Saverling
 31* Fawn Slonka

LECTORS

3* Joel Hoshaw
 4 Dan Hill
 10* Vicki Price
 11 Joel Hoshaw
 17* Linda Prozialeck
 18 Jim Hargreaves
 24* Heidi Staib
 25 Anne Fattman
 31* George Fattman
Saturdays*

ACOLYTES

4 Ushers
 11 Ushers
 18 Ushers
 25 Ushers

SATURDAY PIANISTS

3 Joel Hoshaw
 10 Vicki Price
 17 Linda Prozialeck
 24 Heidi Staib
 31 George Fattman

VIDEO

4 Bill Weible
 11 Bill Grubb
 18 Rob Abele
 25 Bill Price

SOUND

4 Bill Grubb
 11 Rob Abele
 18 Harry Bennett
 25 Chuck Staib

TOWER BELLS

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

First Evangelical Lutheran Church – Johnstown, Pennsylvania
814-536-7521 email: firstlutheran@upia.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 6 – The Chosen FLC	2	3 Pentecost 19 12:30 – Blessing of the Animals 5:00-Word & Sacrament
4 19th Sunday after Pentecost 9:45 Sunday School 10 – Choir Rehearsal 11:00-Word & Sacrament Noon Hospitality	5 11:00 – Staff Meeting 11:45 – Communion 12 – Prayer Meeting	6 12 – Tuesday Noon Recitals 6:30 – Bell choir 6:30 – Bible Study	7	8 2 – Johnstown Conference Meeting	9 6 – Wedding Rehearsal	10 Pentecost 20 2:00 – Becker/Josephson Wedding 5:00-Word & Sacrament (Pastor Nancy)
11 20th Sunday after Pentecost 9:45 Sunday School 10 – Choir Rehearsal 11:00-Word & Service (No Communion) Noon Hospitality	12 11:45 – Communion 12 – Prayer Meeting	13 12 – Tuesday Noon Recitals 6:30 – Bell choir	14	15 6 – The Chosen BLC	16 9 – Friends Helping Friends Workday	17 Pentecost 21 5:00-Word & Sacrament
18 21st Sunday after Pentecost 9:45 Sunday School 10 – Choir Rehearsal 11:00-Word & Sacrament Noon Hospitality	19 11:00 – Staff Meeting 11:45 – Communion 12 – Prayer Meeting	20 12-VSJ Deadline 12 – Tuesday Noon Recitals 6:30 – Bell choir 6:30 – Bible Study	21 7 – Council	22 6:30 – Worship & Music	23	24 Reformation Saturday 5:00-Word & Sacrament
25 Reformation 9:45 Sunday School 10 – Choir Rehearsal 11:00-Word & Sacrament Confirmation Noon Hospitality Pastor Christy on vacation	26 11:45 – Communion 12 – Prayer Meeting	27 12 – Tuesday Noon Recitals 6:30 – Bell choir	28	29	30	31 All Saints Saturday 5:00-Word & Sacrament Sanctuary