

Vine Street Journal

Johnstown, PA

First Lutheran Church

March 2025

A message from Vicar Christy...

"By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

John 13:35

Oh, I am told that Spring is coming. After this last week of snow, ice, snow, ice and then severe winds... I am certainly praying for Spring to arrive soon.

With Spring, comes new flowers just popping their heads up out of the cold ground. With Spring, comes all the bright colors and we look to that glorious Easter Sunday and the Resurrection. In the Resurrection we have hope and love.

But before we can celebrate with great joy the Resurrection of Christ Jesus, we must travel through the time of Lent. We will begin the Lenten season on Ash Wednesday where we will remember that "we are dust, and to dust we shall return."

Within our Allegheny Synod, there is a limited number of available Lay Worship Leaders and Supply Pastors. I have been in discussion with Pastor Kevin Shock, Assistant to the Bishop, regarding a one-day "class" for Worship Assistants within our church family. This will give those of you who feel called to assist with worship or supply in my absence a sense of comfort and knowledge. I ask you to pray about this and if you have any questions, please come and see me. If you find that this something that God is calling you to do – please contact the church office via email so that we can get this from discussion to reality.

As I come to the end of my internship, I want to thank you all for your on-going support and encouragement. I am blessed to be a part of such a wonderful, grace-filled church family. I ask for your continued prayers as I

begin this next journey toward ordained ministry. I am looking forward to what the future will hold for each of us in Christ Jesus.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:6-7

Yours in Christ,
Vicar Christy



Journeying with Jesus to the Cross

23 And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." 24 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

Luke 9:23-24

Let us pray: Holy Father, as we journey with Jesus to the Cross, grant us the strength to embrace our own trials with faith and courage.

Help us to reflect on His sacrifice, understanding the depth of His love for us. May we carry our burdens with grace, drawing closer to You in our moments of suffering. Amen.



Vine Street Journal

Published by the
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

Like us on Facebook

+ + +

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,, Heidi Piurkowsky, Joel Hoshaw, Jody Kirk (Secretary), Rick Blackford, Josh Rinaman, Janice Hill, Dick Schrott, Fawn Slonka, Shirley Waclo.

~ PASTORAL ACTS ~

Vicar Christy Harford

~ CONTRIBUTIONS ~

Organ Restoration Donors

- Anonymous
- Lana V. Custer
- Anne and George Fattman
- Roger Felix
- Raymond Gaydos
- Elizabeth Good and Mark Weakland
- Jeanne Gleason
- Drs. NM and Nancy Grove
- Shirley Hilbrecht
- In Honor of First Lutheran Musicians
by Caryl Swanson
- Christina Kaltenbaugh
- Maria Naylor
- Mary J. Pavlosky
- Barbara Penrod
- Mr. and Mrs. Barry Poglein
- Dr. James and Christine Richey
- Judith A. Roberts
- Bridget Sarosi
- Richard and Patricia Schrott
- Linda Sipes
- Florence A. Warfel, PHD.
- Robert and Janet Wertz

Lent

Ash Wednesday

March 5th

Sundays in Lent:

March 9, 16, 23, 30; April 6

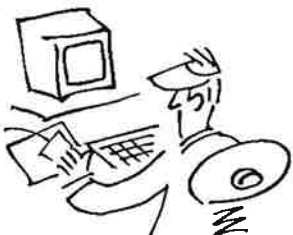
Holy Week:

Palm Sunday - April 13th

Maundy Thursday - April 17th

Good Friday - April 18th

Easter Sunday - April 20th



Next Journal Deadline

Tuesday, March 18

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 family and friends of Joyce Schmid who died January 30.
- + **Congratulations** to Vicar Christy on the completion of her Internship. God's blessings as you continue your journey.
- + **Sympathy and prayers** to family and friends of Theresa (Teri) Fleck who died January 24 in Concord, NC. Teri and her husband, Richard were active members of First before retiring to the South.
- + **Sympathy and prayers** to Vicar Christy, family and friends of her Uncle, Wayne Meyers who died February 2.

Income and Expense Summary

March Financial report will be shared in the April VSJ.
 Thank you for your continued generosity and faithfulness to First Lutheran Church. God bless.



The February council meeting was cancelled due to the weather, along with the annual congregational meeting which was rescheduled for February 22-23. The next meeting will be Wednesday, March 12 at 7:00 pm.

Thought for the month. . .

"For dust you are, and to dust you shall return."
Genesis 3:19



7 Most Powerful Psalms to Pray During Lent

The Psalms are powerful words to pray any time of year because they not only echo the emotions of every person's heart, but they also draw us closer to God. Ever since the seventh century, it has been a common spiritual practice to pray the 7 Penitential Psalms during Lent. For those unfamiliar, penitential psalms acknowledge or confess one's trespasses before the Lord and recognize the need for God's favor and forgiveness. These psalms therefore, make fitting prayers for the repentant sinner - and repentance *always* opens the windows of Heaven for God's blessing.

As you prayerfully meditate on the following *Psalms, during Lent*, think about how they express sorrow for sin and remind us of God's loving mercy. Use that meditation to align with your own thoughts and prayers and pray the words of the psalmist as your own faithfully to God. Follow each psalm with the "Glory Be": *Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, Amen.*

Psalm 143: Domine, exaudi

Psalm 32: Beati quorum

Psalm 38: Domine, ne in furore

Psalm 51: Miserere

Psalm 102: Domine, exaudi

Psalm 130: De profundis

Psalm 6: Domine, ne in furore

March Readings and Psalm

March 2 – Transfiguration of Our Lord

- Exodus 34:29-35
Coming down from Mount Sinai, Moses' face shone
- Psalm 99
Proclaim the greatness of the LORD; worship upon God's holy hill.
- 2 Corinthians 3:12—4:2
With unveiled faces we see the Lord's glory as we are transformed
- Luke 9:28-36 [37-43a]
Jesus is transfigured on the mountain

March 5 – Ash Wednesday

- Joel 2:1-2, 12-17
Return to the LORD, your God
- Isaiah 58:1-12 (alternate)
The fast that God chooses
- Psalm 51:1-17
Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love.
- 2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10
Now is the day of salvation
- Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21
The practice of faith

March 9 – First Sunday in Lent

- Deuteronomy 26:1-11
The LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand
- Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16
God will give the angels charge over you, to guard you in all your ways.
- Romans 10:8b-13
If you confess that Jesus is Lord, you will be saved
- Luke 4:1-13
The temptation of Jesus in the wilderness for forty days

March 16 – Second Sunday in Lent

- Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18
The covenant with Abram and his descendants
- Psalm 27
In the day of trouble, God will give me shelter.

- Philippians 3:17—4:1
Our citizenship is in heaven from where we expect a Savior
- Luke 13:31-35
I have desired to gather Jerusalem as a hen gathers her brood

March 23 – Third Sunday in Lent

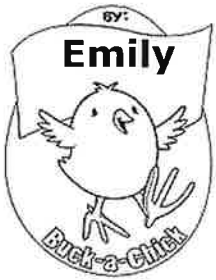
- Isaiah 55:1-9
Everyone who thirsts, come to the water; seek the LORD
- Psalm 63:1-8
O God, eagerly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you.
- 1 Corinthians 10:1-13
Israel, baptized in cloud and seas, ate the same spiritual food as Christians
- Luke 13:1-9
Unless you repent, you will perish: parable of the fig tree

March 30 – Fourth Sunday in Lent

- Joshua 5:9-12
Israel eats bread and grain, the produce of the land
- Psalm 32
Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the LORD.
- 2 Corinthians 5:16-21
The mystery and ministry of reconciliation
- Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32
The parable of the prodigal father and the repentant son



Better known as Shrove Tuesday, our annual Pancake Dinner will be served on Tuesday, March 4th at 6:00 PM. Come for the Fun! Come for the Food! Come for the Foster Bananas made by Howard! Come for the burning of the palms in preparation for Ash Wednesday! A special fun filled evening!



Favorite Lenten Outreach Returns

Welcome back Buck-a-Chick! – a favorite hunger ministry of our church family that directly supports the efforts of ELCA World Hunger. Over the years we have purchased more than 1000 chicks.

A baby chick with its promise of new life is a familiar Easter symbol. A chick with its promise of eggs is also a symbol of hope for a family in need. Nutrient-rich eggs provide food for the family and can be sold at the marketplace, helping families escape poverty for good. It only costs one dollar to provide a family in need with a baby chick.

It has been a tradition to support ELCA World Hunger during Lent and Easter in a variety of ways including our Buck-a-Chick sales. As in years past, yellow paper chicks will be available to purchase, decorate, sign and display for \$1.00 each.

Purchase a chick(s) in honor of or in memory of someone special to you. Fill your Easter baskets with chicks! Ask your friends and neighbors to buck-a chick! Your gifts will bring food, hope and survival to families living in poverty.

Chicks may be purchased and displayed at the tables located in the Lounge and the Social Hall.



Grove Avenue United Methodist Church

FREE STORE

Grove Avenue Methodist Church has an outreach program called Free Store. It provides personal hygiene and cleaning products to those who reside in the Moxham section of Johnstown. They are asking for area churches to help with donations to meet growing needs.

First Lutheran's Outreach Team is adopting this program as a Lenten Ministry. We are asking for all of us to pitch in to help our neighbors.

The Free Store is in special need of:
 infant diapers (all sizes) ,
 toddlers pull ups (all sizes),
 adult diapers (all sizes),
 toilet tissues,
 kitchen size garbage bags.

Please give prayerful consideration to contributing to this request for donations. A basket and/or tub will be placed in the Social Hall and in the Lounge for your donations.

Thank you for helping our brothers and sisters in Moxham.

VOLUNTEER NEEDED

Do you have some extra time on your hands and want something to do? If so, I can use some help in filing some music in our music library and organizing the files in the choir room to help make things easier to locate.

Most any day is good and you can pick how long and when to start. Please contact me if you may have some interest in helping us out with this.

Howard



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.

The score is in!
The winner is World Hunger!



Our Souper Bowl Hunger team celebrated a win on Sunday, February 9! We collected **203 soup items** to support the

ministry of the West End Food Pantry. Our noisy offering buckets yielded **\$289.00** in support of ELCA World Hunger.

Thank you Hunger Team for a great job in tackling hunger needs in our community and globally.

West End food Pantry writes. . .

Thank you for your generous donation to the West End Food Pantry.

It is greatly appreciated and will be put to good use to help the needy in the West End area.



Thank you!



Spring Recital

Tuesday Noon recitals resume April 8.

The *Johnstown Christian School Bell Choir* will play its on-tour program when it opens the Tuesday Noon Recital Series **April 8.**

Kristen Lloyd will direct the bell choir, which is a frequent performer at First Lutheran.

The recitals, followed by lunch, are presented at no charge because they are prepaid by donations plus grants from the 1889 Foundation and Thrivent Financial.

On **April 15** the series will present the annual program by the *Johnstown Area All-Star Jazz Band*. Students from four high schools will perform together for the first time.

"This a major feature of the series," said George Fattman, chair. "These outstanding young musicians have never played together before. Their performance is thrilling. It attracts our biggest audience."

On **April 22** *fiddlers Gary Noll and Carl Rahkonen* will play a program of Irish tunes. They are among artists who look forward to reappearances in the popular recital series.

On **April 29** *Preston Showman*, organist at Friedens Lutheran Church and a performer at various churches in Pittsburgh, will play a recital of classics. This will be the final recital before the organ console is sent away for a make-over.





Food Pantry Needs

More and more families are seeking help from their local food pantries and food drives. Community food pantries continue to

struggle with more needs than available supplies in their respective communities. Many food pantries rely heavily on donations they receive. Funding to support food pantries has been decreased over the past few years. Looking around our own community most people cannot actually see or imagine the significant needs of their friends and neighbors, but it is there.

Traditionally, here at First we have had a Lenten servant ministry of hosting a food drive during Lent. Maintaining this Lenten tradition we will once again lift up hunger needs in our community and in the world.

Each week during Lent we will ask for many items needed by the West End Food Pantry.

Lent 1 – March 9-March 15

Breakfast items – Cereal, breakfast bars, pop tarts, oatmeal, granola bars, etc.;

Lent 2 – March 16-22

Peanut butter, Jellies, Salad dressings, Condiments;

Lent 3 – March 23-29

Meals in a box – mac & cheese, Hamburger Helper, Pasta Sides, Rice-a-Roni;

Lent 4 – March 30-April 5

Canned or packaged meats, fish – tuna fish, chicken, Spam, stew, chili, corn beef;

Lent 5 – April 6-April 12

Paper supplies – Toilet paper, paper towels, napkins, facial tissues;

Holy Week – April 13-April 20

Soap items – Bar soap, hand soap, dish washing liquid, laundry soap, baby wipes.

Any of these items may be donated during Lent and left in the Lounge area near the grocery cart.

“A generous person will be blessed, for he gives some of his food to the poor.” Proverbs 22:9

ELCA World Hunger's
40 DAYS of Giving



Flower sign-up

ALTAR/ORGAN FLOWERS

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

Altar dates available:

March 23, 30; April 27; May 18

Organ dates available:

March 2, 9, 23, 30; April No Opening; May 4, 18, 25

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 for Organ Flowers - \$30. Payment will be due on or before the date you have chosen. Thank you!



Following the church service on April 6th we will enjoy a showing of a Sight and Sound show via DVD.

If you have attended Sight and Sound you know how special these shows are. If you have never seen one, you are in for a treat.

To add to the enjoyment we will have pizza and popcorn and boxes of movie candy such as Dots, Boston Baked Beans, Snow Caps and all.

This is another special time for the family. Do plan to attend.

BYOT (Bring Your Own Tools)!!??

Wondering what this is?? Well. Clear your calendars for Saturday, May 3 for a church clean-up day and a picnic lunch!



Yep, we are planning to gather the troops, asking you to bring your own tools (BYOT) – gardening tools, hand held vacuums, buckets, rags, and any other

cleaning tools you think might be needed.

Outreach is planning for this day with Dick Schrott’s guidance putting together a chore list. There will be plenty for everyone to do.

The group will stop mid-day to share a picnic lunch. Mark the date now.

Remember many hands make for light work! And don’t forget to BYOT!!

**Souper Bowl 2025 – 203 soup items collected & \$289.00 in noisy offering. ⇄

WALK OF HOPE



Have you seen the parking meter around the church building?? The meter is there for folks to contribute their donations

in support of the Walk of Hope to be held in June.

Our First Lutheran Walkers have walked this event for a number of years. They are getting ready to walk this year again and they have been encouraging other walkers and donations in support of the walk. This annual fundraiser supports the many cancer needs in our community. It is a fun day joining a great support group.

Donations may also be sent to the church. There will be T-shirts available for the walk, if you plan to join our church group and want a T-shirt speak with Ann Furlong or Fawn Kiser.

Walkers of all ages are welcome to join in the group. See you in June.



Volunteer Page - Month of March

ALTAR GUILD

COUNCIL GREETERS –

FLOWER DELIVERY–

ACOLYTES

- 2
5 Ash Wednesday
9
16
23
30

COMMUNION ASSISTANT

- 2
5 Ash Wednesday
9
16
23
30

LECTORS

- 1* Fawn Slonka
2 Rob Abele
8* Fawn Slonka
9 Bill Hargreaves
15* Joel Hoshaw
16 Dan Hill
22* George Fattman
23 Calvin Anderson
29
30

*Saturdays

SATURDAY PIANISTS

- 1 Heidi Staib
8 Luis Gonzelez
15 Joel Hoshaw
22 George Fattman
29

SOUND

- 2
5 Ash Wednesday
9
16
23
30


VIDEO

TOWER BELLS

- Heidi Staib Sunday 2, 9, 16, 23
Harriett Miller Monday 3, 10, 17, 24
George Fattman Tuesday 4, 11, 18, 25
Anne Fattman Wednesday 5, 12, 19, 26
Vicki Price Thursday 6, 27
Kim Rauch Friday 7, 14, 21, 28

March 2025

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>2 Transfiguration of Our Lord</p> <p>10:45-Sunday School</p> <p>11:00- Word and Sacrament Vicar Harford</p> <p>Noon-Hospitality</p> <p>Bold Women's Day</p>	<p>3</p> <p>11:00-Staff Meeting</p> <p>11:45-Communion</p> <p>12-Prayer Meeting.</p> 	<p>4</p> <p>6:30-Bellchoir</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Ash Wednesday</p> <p>Word and Sacrament with Imposition of Ashes</p> <p>12:30 pm - First</p> <p>7:00 pm - BLC</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>1 Eve of the Transfiguration Of Our Lord</p> <p>5:00 -Word and Sacrament Vicar Harford</p> <p>8 Eve of Lent One</p> <p>Clocks spring forward</p> <p>5:00 -Word and Sacrament Vicar Harford</p>
<p>9 First Sunday in Lent</p> <p>10:45-Sunday School</p> <p>11:00- Word and Sacrament Vicar Harford</p> <p>Noon-Hospitality</p>	<p>10</p> <p>11:00-Staff Meeting</p> <p>11:45-Communion</p> <p>12-Prayer Meeting.</p>	<p>11</p> <p>6:30-Bible Study</p> <p>6:30-Bellchoir</p>	<p>12</p> <p>7-Council</p>	<p>13</p> <p>7-By the Heart Bible Study-BLC</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15 Eve of Lent Two</p> <p>5:00 -Word and Sacrament Vicar Harford</p>
<p>16 Second Sunday in Lent</p> <p>10:45-Sunday School</p> <p>11:00- Word and Sacrament Vicar Harford</p> <p>Noon-Hospitality</p>	<p>17 St. Patrick's Day</p> <p>11:00-Staff Meeting</p> <p>11:45-Communion</p> <p>12-Prayer Meeting.</p>	<p>18</p> <p>6:30-Bellchoir</p> <p>12-VSJ</p> <p>Deadline</p>	<p>19</p> <p>11-Tower Moments</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22 Eve of Lent Three</p> <p>5:00-Of Land and Seasons Word and Sacrament Vicar Harford</p>
<p>23 Third Sunday in Lent</p> <p>10:45-Sunday School</p> <p>11:00-Of Land and Seasons Word and Sacrament Vicar Harford</p> <p>Noon-Hospitality</p>	<p>24</p> <p>11:00-Staff Meeting</p> <p>11:45-Communion</p> <p>12-Prayer Meeting.</p>	<p>25</p> <p>6:30-Bible Study</p> <p>6:30-Bellchoir</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p> <p>6:30-Worship and Music</p> <p>7-By the Heart Bible Study-First</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29 Eve of Lent Four</p> <p>5:00-Healing and Prayers NO Communion Vicar Harford</p>
<p>30 Fourth Sunday in Lent</p> <p>10:45-Sunday School</p> <p>11:00- Healing and Prayers NO Communion</p>	<p>31</p> <p>11:00-Staff Meeting</p> <p>11:45-Communion</p> <p>12-Prayer Meeting</p>	