

Vine Street Journal

Johnstown, PA

First Lutheran Church

May 2026

A message from Pastor Christy...

"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." (2 Corinthians 13:14)

As we step into the month of May... a season where the signs of new life are all around us. Trees are budding, flowers are stretching toward the sun, and the days are growing longer. It's hard not to notice how creation itself seems to echo the promise we live in every day: that in Christ, new life is always breaking in. May gives us several meaningful moments to pause and reflect together.

On Mother's Day, we give thanks for the women who have nurtured, guided, and cared for us. Whether mothers, grandmothers, godmothers, or other faithful figures in our lives, we recognize these relationships as gifts from God. At the same time, we also hold space for those for whom this day is difficult. Those who grieve, long, or carry complicated stories. Here, all are met with compassion, and where God's steadfast love holds us together.

Later in the month, we celebrate Pentecost. The day the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the Church. It's a moment full of energy and movement: wind, fire, languages, and bold proclamation. Pentecost reminds us that the Spirit who stirred those first disciples is still at work among us now – calling, gathering, enlightening, and sustaining us in faith. Sometimes we may feel uncertain or even weary, but Pentecost assures us that God is not finished with us yet. The Spirit continues to show up in ordinary people doing extraordinary things in Christ's name.

And then we arrive at Holy Trinity Sunday, where we reflect on the mystery – knowing it is not something we can fully explain, and that's okay. In fact, it reminds us that God is always greater than our understanding.

What we can say is this: the Holy Trinity is about relationship – our relationship through Christ Jesus. And through that relationship, we are drawn into God's perfect love. Faith isn't about having everything figured out; it's about trust – being claimed by God, and never let go.

As we journey into the month of May together, let us give thanks for the ways God continues to bring growth – not only in the world around us, but also within our church family. My prayer is that you can notice the ways God is present not only in those big celebrations, but also in those quiet, everyday moments. Whether it's through conversation, a helping hand, a moment of rest, or a word of Scripture that speaks just when you need it. God is near. Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, we don't always recognize Jesus walking beside us. And yet, he is there – present in the journey, revealed in word and meal, and drawing near to us when we least expect it.

As May unfolds in fullness and light, may you see signs of God's grace blooming all around you, and may this season draw you into renewed hope, peace, love and joy.

SHARING RECIPES...

Ambrosia Cake – Linda Prozialeck

Cake:

1 box Yellow Cake Mix $\frac{3}{4}$ cup Oil

3 eggs

1 (11 oz) can Mandarin Oranges with juice

Beat together. Bake in 9 x 13 pan. 325 degrees. 35 minutes. Cool then icing.

Icing:

1 (15 oz) can crushed pineapple with juice

1 box Instant Vanilla Pudding

1 (8 oz) Cool Whip

Mix pineapple and pudding. Add cool whip. Beat well. Frost cake and refrigerate.



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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

*Jessica Boring, 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

Donna Caprous

Greer Koeller

Barry A. Critchfield

Albert Johnson

Sharon Orner

Lance & Debbie Shomo

Paul Abele

Barbara Penrod

Nancy Turner

Jennifer Bennear

Beverly Brocious

Ann Furlong

Jane Hanechak

Harriett Miller

Gerald & Paula Regan

Richard & Patricia Schrott

SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION

*Barbara Miltenberger – Eve of the Resurrection of
the Lord*



Next Journal Deadline

Tuesday
May 19, 2026

Share your news with us!

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



	Current YTD Actual Jan. 1 thru Mar. 31, 2026	Current YTD Budget Jan. 1 thru Mar. 31, 2026	Difference over+/under- Budget
Regular Offering Income	\$37,870.90	\$40,421.75	\$-2,550.85
Trust Fund Income	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other Income	\$1,013.24	\$1,033.24	-\$20.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$38,884.14	\$41,454.99	\$-2,570.85
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$56,985.64	\$44,977.35	\$12,008.29

The Church Council met on April 8, 2026. Of note: Tuesday noon recitals continued through April and were very well attended. The church’s workday is scheduled for May 22nd. There will be plenty of jobs both indoors and outdoors. Please help make our church beautiful! Church office hours on Fridays will be 9:00AM to 12 noon starting June 6th. Other days remain 9:AM-2:00PM. Worship and Music committee is working with Stream labs to simultaneously broadcast live Sunday services on You Tube and Facebook in near future.

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

The next regular council meeting will be June 10, 2026, at 7:00 pm.



Upcoming worship opportunities:

May 2 – Church Cleanup Day @ 9am.

May 3 – Church Music Sunday during 11:00 service.

May 10 – Mother’s Day

May 19 – Last Bible Study @ 6:30pm.

May 21 – Good Neighbor Dinner, “Going Hawaiian” Entertainment by Sam Coco @ 5:30pm.

May 24 – Pentecost (Wear Red)

May 31– Holy Trinity



May Readings and Psalm

May 3 – Fifth Sunday of Easter

- Acts 7:55-60
The martyrdom of Stephen
- Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16
Into your hands, O LORD, I commend my spirit.
- 1 Peter 2:2-10
God's people chosen to proclaim God's mighty acts
- John 14:1-14
Christ the way, truth, and life

May 10 – Sixth Sunday of Easter

- Acts 17:22-31
Paul's message to the Athenians
- Psalm 66:8-20
Bless our God, you peoples; let the sound of praise be heard.
- 1 Peter 3:13-22
The days of Noah, a sign of baptism
- John 14:15-21
Christ our advocate

May 17 – Seventh Sunday of Easter

- Acts 1:6-14
Jesus' companions at prayer after his departure
- Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35
Sing to God, who rides upon the clouds.
- 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11
God will sustain and restore those who suffer
- John 17:1-11
Christ's prayer for his disciples

May 24 – Day Of Pentecost

- Acts 2:1-21
Filled with the Spirit to tell God's deeds
- Numbers 11:24-30 (alternate)
The Spirit comes upon the elders of Israel
- Psalm 104:24-34, 35b
Send forth your Spirit and renew the face of the earth. (Ps. 104:30)
- 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13
Varieties of gifts from the same Spirit
- Acts 2:1-21 (alternate)
Filled with the Spirit to tell God's deeds
- John 20:19-23
The Spirit poured out
- John 7:37-39 (alternate)
The Spirit will provide living water

May 31st – The Holy Trinity

- Genesis 1:1—2:4a
The creation of the heavens and the earth
- Psalm 8
How majestic is your name in all the earth!
- 2 Corinthians 13:11-13
Paul's farewell to the church at Corinth
- Matthew 28:16-20
Living in the community of the Trinity



It has come to my attention that our sanctuary grand piano is showing its age and will need more care, repair, and tuning as time goes on. This Steinway piano is over 100 years old. Tunings during the winter months last less than a week. Cracks in the soundboard and pin block are also signs of its aging condition. Tuesday Noon Recital performers point out the instrument doesn't match the caliber of a fine recitalist. As we use our piano to accompany the choir, lead worship, and for recitals I feel we should have an exceptional instrument for our church. I am on the lookout for a well-cared-for grand piano that meets our needs and offers recitalists a responsive and expressive instrument. Any piano to be considered will be evaluated by a qualified piano technician and "test-driven" by an expert performer.

Kim Rauch



The April Tuesday Noon Recitals were appreciated by so many audience members and guests to our church. The quality of the performances was matched by the amazing hospitality of all our volunteers. We are grateful for those who set up, greet performers and usher, print programs, communicate press releases, prepare the well-loved meals, and support the Tuesday Noon Recitals in time and financial gifts. The success is obvious in our attendance and those who come back weekly to the programs. We are already looking ahead to our July programs.

Kim Rauch and the TNR Task Force





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 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!

Thank you for your ongoing financial support of **United Lutheran Seminary**. We are deeply grateful for your gifts and faithful partnership as we prepare ULS students to witness to and participate in God's work in the world through spiritual leadership, public advocacy, meaningful worship, and care of neighbor rooted in God's grace and love.

A big thank you to the techs who faithfully help with the video & sound every week. Your dedication & skills help our congregation to hear clearly and make our video ministry possible. It's a pleasure to work with you! Thanks for your service! More helpers are always welcome! **Rob Abele**

To the **April Altar Guild**: Caryl Swanson, Greer Koeller, Polly Grubb, Shirley Waclo, Vicki Price, Karen Bennett, Patti Schrott, Kathy Stephenson, Fawn Slonka, Donna Kovalchek, Annie Hayes. We will continue training for Altar Guild at 10:15am on Sundays in May to Set up and Clean up.

To the **April pianists**, Joel Hoshaw, Heidi Staib, Kim Rauch, and Linda Prozialeck.

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

To **April Lectors**, we had many **services!** Bill Grubb, Tom Roberts, Dick Schrott, Rob Abele, Howard Bennett, Jim Hargreaves, Callie Bennear, Lilian Boring, JD Hill, Josie Hill, Abbie Savering, Rick Blackford, Josh Rinaman, Kim Rauch, Heidi Staib, Joel Hoshaw, Linda Prozialeck, Vicki Price, Annie Hayes, Barb Miltenberger, Fawn Slonka. To the **Acolytes**, Callie Bennear, Lilian Boring, Josie Hill and Abbie Savering. Thanks to our **Crucifers** JD Hill, and Abbie. Thank you also to **Barry Critchfield** for always being our Acolyte.

To the **Easter Decorators**: Bill and Polly Grubb, Bill and Vicki Price, Fawn Slonka, Donna Kovalchek and Dick Schrott.



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 the 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.

Congratulations to **Howard Bennett**, who in the end of February was nominated and elected by the Johnstown Mayor and City Council to a 3 year term as a member of the Loan Review Board

Mark your calendars for the Upcoming events:

May Workday: Our May workday is Saturday, May 2. We will gather by 9 a.m. There will be two crews. One crew will work outdoors, cleaning and mulching the plantings. The other crew will work indoors to clean the library. Lunch will be served in the conference room at the back of the building. Many hands help ease the work, so thank you in advance for coming to help.

Music Sunday is May 3rd

Healing Service is May 9th and 10th.

Ascension/Easter 7 is May 16th and 17th

Pentecost is May 24th. Geraniums will be available for purchase. Sign up in the lounge or social Hall. Cost is \$8.00. We will be decorating on Saturday May 23rd at 9am. Red for Pentecost. All are welcome and encouraged to help!

Saturday service on the 23rd will be in the Sanctuary.

We have a new **Pentecost Banner** to cut. We started on Tuesday April 7th. All hands are welcome! We need to complete by Pentecost, May 24th!

Holy Trinity is May 31st. Then we start the Green Season

Of the Land and Seasons is June 20th and 21st for the change of season **and** July 5th through August 9th. **Outdoor Service** is Saturday, August 8th.

Good Neighbor Dinner is May 21st at 5:30pm.

Geraniums for Pentecost: May 24. Sign-up sheets are in the lounge area. Deadline for ordering May 11, 2026.

Bulletins Sponsorship & Tribune Democrat Sponsorship.

There is a sign-up sheet in the lounge if you would like to sign up to sponsor Bulletins and/or a Newspaper Ad.

The cost for the bulletin ad is: \$20

The cost for the newspaper ad is: \$11

Thank you for your continued support.

PENTECOST BANNER PAPER-CUTTING

Pentecost will arrive on May 24 this year. A new papercutting banner celebrating this spirit-filled day has been created by Martha Ringler from South Fork. Martha has been designing banners and creative liturgical art for many years. Her work can be seen in her own church in Wilmore, Laurel Trinity in Jennerstown, Benscreek Lutheran, and here at First Lutheran. We will need those with a steady hand, deftness with an X-acto knife, and some spare time to work on the Pentecost banner. Martha has included key words from the Pentecost story found in the book of Acts. Cutting through layers of paper and revealing the positive/negative space is amazing fun. Several copies of the banner will be made and First and Benscreek will share the artwork through the Pentecost season.

The banner and supplies can be found in the downstairs Sunday School room and will be ready for cutters by April 7.

See Kim Rauch or Vicki Price for details.



Volunteer Page - Month of May

ALTAR GUILD

- 3 Greer Koeller
- 10 Kathy Stephenson, Vicki Price
- 17 Kathy Stephenson, Vicki Price
- 24 Kathy Stephenson, Vicki Price
- 31 Kathy Stephenson, Vicki Price

COUNCIL GREETERS – Vicki Price

FLOWER DELIVERY– Dick Schrott

ACOLYTES

- 3 Ushers
- 10 Ushers
- 17 Ushers
- 24 Ushers
- 31 Ushers

COMMUNION ASSISTANT

- 3 Josh Rinaman
- 10 Calvin Anderson
- 17 Jody Kirk
- 24 Barry Critchfield
- 31 Bill Hargreaves

LECTORS

- 2* Heidi Staib
 - 3 Josh Rinaman
 - 9* Vicki Price
 - 10 Abby Savering
 - 16* George Fattman
 - 17 Jody Kirk
 - 23* Joel Hoshaw
 - 24 Ann Furlong
 - 30* Linda Prozialeck
 - 31 Bill Hargreaves
- *Saturdays

SATURDAY PIANISTS

- 2 Heidi Staib
- 9 Vicki Price
- 16 Goerge Fattman
- 23 Joel Hoshaw
- 30 Linda Prozialeck

SOUND

- 3 Bill Grubb
- 10 Chuck Staib
- 17 Harry Bennett
- 24 Rick Blackford
- 31 Calvin Anderson

VIDEO

- 3 Bill Price
- 10 Bill Hargreaves
- 17 Bill Weible
- 24 Bill Grubb
- 31 Rob Abele

TOWER BELLS

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



The Lord's Prayer

The Tuesday Bible Study group read and discussed the book, Rediscovering the Lord's prayer by Art Simon. Afterward we wrote our own wording of the prayer or in some cases a reflection on the prayer. We would like to share our thoughts with you.

- "Heavenly Father, Lead us to follow your heavenly example here on earth. Thank you for giving us the tools to sustain our lives and guard our freedom. Forgive our inequities and help us to forgive our brothers and sisters that we may live as you have taught us. Keep us safe from harm and bad influences so we may truly walk in your path. All praise and glory to You, the Almighty."
- "Heavenly Father of us all. Holy is Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done in us here as in heaven. Provide for our daily needs. And forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. And save us from the time of trial. To You be all praise and thanks now and forever. Amen"
- "Our Father, grant me Your wisdom to know when I should be praying and when to just listen and not speak. When I pray let me remember those who are lost or forgotten. I shall follow You all the days of my life. Amen."
- "Dear Father – who watches over us in all we do and sustains our souls. Your name shall always be a beacon to our faith and be held in highest honor. As your children, we realize that You rule the kingdom of the earth. We know that You will come to us as

you promised. Make us accept Your will in our life today. We do not live by bread alone. You supply us with our physical needs, and we ask that You supply our spiritual needs as well. Our sins are numerous. Please forgive our sins and lead us to a more faithful life. Enable us to resist temptation though we know Your forgiveness will come to us if we are sincere in our faith. You are the One who rules the world. You deserve our prayers and praise. May we be worthy of a place in Your kingdom in Paradise. Amen."

- "Heavenly Father, Creator of all things, Your Word is a treasure; my heart sings. When I cried out to You, Your truth was revealed, my life made new. My purpose now is to serve You well and reflect Your light in all that I do. I hope in Your promises and Your voice I seek. Let Your Spirit be with me and bless me with all that I need. My Lord, Savior of the world, forgive my inequities and help me to forgive too. If ever I fail, set my feet on the path that leads me back to You."
- Father, we come to You to offer up prayers to have peace, patience, love, hope, for all family and friends. Grant all those who may be having health issues, a restoration of good health. Heavenly Father, You have listened to my prayers. I understand they shall be answered in Your time. Thank You for helping me make it one day at a time."



May 2026

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>Happy Mother's Day!</i>						
3⁵th Sunday of Easter 10:45 – Sunday School 11:00 – Word & Sacrament MUSIC SUNDAY!! Noon Hospitality	4 11:00 – Staff Meeting 11:44 – Communion 12 – Prayer Meeting 6:30 – Joint Worship & Music at First	5 6:30 – Bell Choir 6:30 – Bible Study	6 7 – Pre-caucus Assembly Meeting at St. David's	7	8	9 Easter 6 5:00 – Service of the Word Healing – No Communion
10 6th Sunday of Easter 10:45 – Sunday School 11:00 – Service of the Word Healing – No Communion Noon Hospitality	11 11:00 – Staff Meeting 11:45 – Communion 12 – Prayer Meeting	12 6:30 – Bell Choir	13 7 – Council	14	15	16 Ascension Saturday 5:00 – Word & Sacrament
Mother's Day	18 11:00 – Staff Meeting 11:45 – Communion 12 – Prayer Meeting	19 6:30 – Bell Choir 6:30 – Bible Study VSJ Deadline	20	21 5:30 – Good Neighbor Dinner	22	23 Pentecost Saturday 9:00 Sanctuary Decorating 5:00 – Word & Sacrament
24 Day of Pentecost 10:45 - Sunday School 11:00 – Word & Sacrament Noon Hospitality	25 11:00 – Staff Meeting 11:45 – Communion 12 – Prayer Meeting Memorial Day	26 6:30 – Bell Choir	27	28	29	30 Holy Trinity Saturday 5:00 – Word & Sacrament
31 The Holy Trinity 10:45 – Sunday School 11:00 – Word & Sacrament Noon Hospitality	"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13					