

First News First

Volume 61, Issue 2

February 2026

February often feels like a quiet month. The decorations of Christmas are long put away, the new year has settled into routine, and the days are still short. Yet in the church, February carries us to the edge of one of our most meaningful seasons — Lent.

Lent is not a season we rush into lightly. It begins with ashes and honesty. On February 18, Ash Wednesday, we hear the ancient words, “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” These words are not meant to discourage us, but to ground us. They remind us that we are fragile, dependent, and deeply in need of God’s mercy and grace.

Lent is a gift. It is a time to pause, to reflect, and to return to God. We take time to pray and to return to what truly gives life. In a world that constantly urges us to be faster, stronger, and more self-sufficient, Lent invites us to be truthful, humble, and open before the Lord.

The Scriptures for this season will lead us through stories of wilderness, testing, repentance, and trust. They remind us that God does not abandon us in these places, but meets us there. Just as God provided water from the rock and manna in the desert, God provides mercy, forgiveness, and new life for us today.

As we begin this holy journey, I invite you to consider a simple Lenten practice:

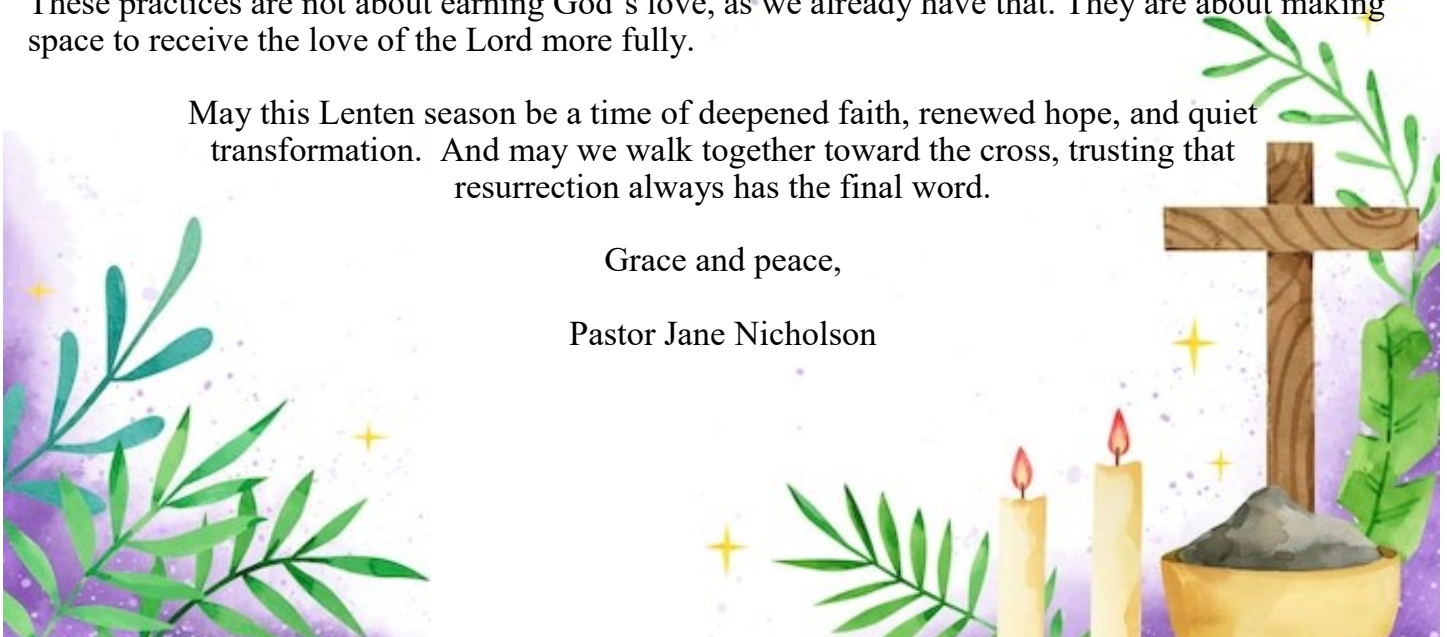
- setting aside time each day for prayer,
- engaging Scripture more intentionally,
- offering acts of generosity and compassion,
- and fasting from whatever distracts us from God’s presence.

These practices are not about earning God’s love, as we already have that. They are about making space to receive the love of the Lord more fully.

May this Lenten season be a time of deepened faith, renewed hope, and quiet transformation. And may we walk together toward the cross, trusting that resurrection always has the final word.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Jane Nicholson



WORSHIP

February 1	Worship with Holy Communion
February 8	Scout Sunday
February 15	Transfiguration Sunday with Holy Communion and the burial of "The Alleluia"
Wednesday, February 18	Ash Wednesday 9:30 Imposition of Ashes (Chapel) 5:30 Imposition of Ashes (Chapel) 7:00 Full Worship with Holy Communion and Imposition of Ashes (Sanctuary)
February 22	Worship
Wednesday, February 25	LARC Worship 7:00, soup 5:30 at Corpus Christi
March 1	Worship with Holy Communion (Pancake and Sausage Brunch following worship with Variety Show.)
Wednesday, March 4	LARC Worship 7:00, soup 5:30 at Corpus Christi
March 8	Worship
Wednesday, March 11	LARC Worship 7:00, soup 5:30 at First Lutheran
March 15	Worship with Holy Communion
Wednesday, March 18	LARC Worship 7:00, soup 5:30 at Trinity Lutheran
March 22	Worship
Wednesday, March 25	LARC Worship 7:00, soup 5:30 at Trinity Episcopal
March 29	Palm Sunday 10:45 with Cantata and Holy Communion

ASH WEDNESDAY Worship

Ash Wednesday is February 18. This year we will be having a 9:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. service with scripture, prayer, and the imposition of ashes. These services will last no longer than 10-15 minutes. The evening service will be our traditional service including music, imposition of ashes and Holy Communion. You are welcome to invite friends and neighbors to worship on this day.

Ash Wednesday Worship — February 18

9:30am	Imposition of Ashes (Chapel)
5:30pm	Imposition of Ashes (Chapel)
7:00pm	Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion (Sanctuary)

LENTEN WEDNESDAYS

Join us on Wednesday evenings for 5 weeks beginning February 25 for our Lutheran, Anglican, Roman Catholic (LARC) worship and fellowship. Soup suppers will be served at 5:30 at the church where worship will be taking place. Worship will then be at 7:00 p.m. Corpus Christi has graciously offered to host worship twice on February 25 and March 4. First Lutheran will host on March 11. Trinity Lutheran will host on March 18. And Trinity Episcopal will host on March 25. The theme for our LARC series is ***"Living Water in a Dry Land."*** Make a spiritual commitment this Lent to attend worship and fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

LARC LENT 2026

THEME: Living Water in a Dry Land

We will be having Wednesday Lenten services at the Lutheran, Anglican (Episcopalian), and Roman Catholic Churches (LARC Churches) February 25 through March 25 at 7:00 p.m.

LENT 2026 *Living Water in a Dry Land*

Date	Weekly Theme	Location	Preacher
February 25	Thirsting for God Isaiah 55	Corpus Christi Roman Catholic 320 Philadelphia Ave Chambersburg, PA 17201 (717) 264-6317	The Rev. Tommy Wimsae Trinity Lutheran
March 4	Water from the Rock Exodus 17	Corpus Christi Roman Catholic 320 Philadelphia Ave Chambersburg, PA 17201 (717) 264-6317	The Rev. Jane Nicholson First Lutheran
March 11	Living Water Offered John 4	First Lutheran 43 W Washington St Chambersburg PA 17201 717-264-2015	Deacon Ford Brooks Trinity Episcopal
March 18	Washed in the Water Romans 6	Trinity Lutheran 431 Philadelphia Ave Cham- bersburg, PA 17201 (717) 263-8156	Ministers of Corpus Christi Catholic
March 25	A River of Life Ezekiel 47	Trinity Episcopal 58 S 2nd St Chambersburg, PA 17201 (717) 264-6351	Ministers of Corpus Christi Catholic

LENT SOUP SUPPERS A soup and bread supper will be held each Wednesday evening at 5:30 at the **CHURCH WHERE WORSHIP WILL BE HELD**. If you are able to help serve, clean-up, or provide soup on March 11 for the supper being held at First Lutheran, please contact Barb Evans at 717-360-2535.

LENTEN OFFERINGS The LARC Lenten offerings received on Wednesday evenings will be donated to Hearken House Ministry. Hearken House Ministry provides a work/training program for those being released on parole from a Pennsylvania state or county jail and who strongly desire to change the way of life they have chosen in the past.

Participants must be willing to receive personal management and relationship training relating to keeping promises, being accountable, displaying love, and demonstrating dependability. Participants must commit to its work/training program requiring residents to work full-time at the ministry's warehouse. Participants will learn to operate pallet jacks, forklifts, and other tools and machinery. While contributing as a part of a team, participants receive compensation and learn valuable work skills to be used upon graduating. Checks to support Hearken House may be made payable to LARC.

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

Property

- Chambersburg Anglican Fellowship will be renting our chapel space and one additional room on Sunday mornings from 8 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. at a cost of \$25 per week. They will use the space every other week.
- Cumberland Valley School of Music has an interest in renting 2-3 rooms for lessons this coming fall. We meet with them on January 15 to discuss.

Long Range Planning

- The Executive Committee is meeting with Trinity Lutheran Leadership on January 20 to discuss our building and explore possibilities.
- Contracting with Real Estate Attorney, Mark Orndorf, to help us legally explore the potential disposition of the church facility and how to work with the Rose Rent Agreement. His report states that properties devoted to a charitable use receive special protection under PA law and that oversight rests with the PA Attorney General to ensure that charitable assets are preserved and used for their intended purpose. The Orphans Court of PA would work with the sale and it is believed that the Rose Rent agreement would be incorporated into this proceeding. The court could exercise its authority to 'extinguish' or modify the covenant if it determines that continued compliance is no longer feasible in light of the congregation's declining membership and disposition of the property.
- The council will review the proposal presented by Architect, Vern McKissick, to provide consulting services for a 'Condition Assessment and Rehabilitation Plan' for our current facility. The council will consider this at the February meeting.

Worship

- Ash Wednesday worship on February 18 at 9:30, 5:30, and 7:00 p.m.
- Scout Sunday, February 8.
- Outdoor worship at Greene Township Park – June 28, 2026

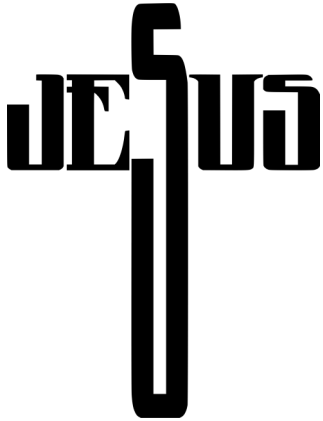
Annual Meeting

- The Annual Meeting will be after worship January 25 to share 2025 highlights, give update on Long Range Planning, and Approve budget for 2026.

Synod Assembly

- Synod Assembly will be held on Friday and Saturday, June 5 and 6 at St. Matthew in York. Two members from our congregation are needed to be voting members along with Pastor Nicholson and Deacon Dorand.

SUMMER CAMPS



SUMMER LUTHERAN CAMPS

Nawakwa and Kirchenwald

Summer planning is taking place for families, and we want to make sure you are aware of the calendar for Lutheran Summer Camps in our area. The camp schedule may be found online at



www.LutheranCamping.org/forms/SummerBrochure.pdf



First Lutheran has campership money available to help with the cost. Please talk with Pastor Nicholson for details.

LUNCH AND VARIETY SHOW

Following Worship on March 1st
we will be having a Pancake and Sausage Brunch along with a Variety Show.

This is a fund raiser to help our young people attend camps and retreats. If you have some variety to share (skit, jokes, music, dance, magic, juggling) you get the idea – please speak with Cassie Craven to have your act placed in the program. Save the date to attend and have a great time with everyone. Thanks to Thrivent Financial for helping us with expenses.





On behalf of the Emergency Clearinghouse Fund of the United Churches of the Chambersburg Area, I would like to thank you for your very generous donation. It will go a long way to ensure that those in need of help and are struggling during these difficult times will have funds available for necessities. We are so very thankful for your support of this vital ministry in our area. May God's blessings always be with you as you carry out His work.

Gratefully yours,
Candice Wagner
Treasurer
Emergency Needs Clearinghouse Fund

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Thank you for the recent donation to Mercy House of Chambersburg. Your generosity touches the hearts of our guests and their families during life's most tender moments. You are more than a donor—you are a vital member of the Mercy House community. Your kindness creates ripples of compassion that extend far beyond a single moment, bringing light and hope during one of life's most difficult passages.

As we celebrate this season of gratitude and reflection, we wish you and yours peace, warmth, and joy. Thank you, again, and best wishes for happy holidays.

Sincerely,
DeWayna Hogue Pittman
Advancement Director

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Mary Beth,
On behalf of the Cumberland Valley Business Alliance (CVBA), I would like to thank you and your church family for your generosity and contribution to our First Responders Appreciation Day. We have seen the impact that was made and we are grateful. We hope you have a blessed Christmas season.

With gratitude,
Nikki Howells & The CVBA



Thank you to WELCA for the beautiful red rose and to everyone for all of the prayers during my hospitalization. Also thank you to Pastor Nicholson for her visits.

Connie Wilkins

Dear Friends at First Evangelical Lutheran Church,

On behalf of everyone at South Central Community Action Programs (SCCAP), I want to extend our heartfelt gratitude for your generous support.

Thank you for choosing to be part of this vital work. We are deeply grateful for your trust, your compassion, and your partnership. Together, we are creating a community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive—no matter the challenges we face.

Warm regards,
Megan Shreve
Chief Executive Officer

NEIGHBORHOOD TASK TEAM

Sharing God's love in our community

Birthday Bags for Little Daisy's Closet

The needs are: large Birthday bags, plates, napkins, candles, balloons, small gifts, snack items, cakes, icings, cake pans. Thank you for your contributions to make up the bags!

Joyce Ray





The Women of the ELCA (WELCA)

will gather for Bible Study and fellowship on **Thursday, February 12th at 1:00 p.m.** in Meeting Room 1. We continue our study of the Women of the Bible Speak. We have learned about some of the women in the Bible that are not so famous but still important. Janet Friend will lead the discussion on Hannah. We would love to have you join us for the short study followed by some snacks and fellowship time.

**All women of the church
are welcome!**



Ladies Breakfast

The Women's Fellowship Breakfast

will be held at 8:30 a.m.
on February 18th
at Sunrise Diner

(1110 Lincoln Way E. Chambersburg)

All Ladies are Welcome!

A SCHOOL FOR DEAF CHILDREN

In the remote Amazon of Peru, over 3,000 deaf children face a heartbreaking reality. Without access to education in their own language – Peruvian Sign Language, most are hidden away to work in fields or beg on streets. Many experience violence and exploitation. For indigenous deaf children in rural communities, the risk of trafficking is devastatingly high. But there is hope.

Peace and Hope's School for deaf children in Nueva Cajamarca is proving that with the right support, deaf children can thrive. This pioneering school provides free education in Peruvian Sign language, while teaching families sign language and building a supportive deaf community. Peru has over 532,000 people with hearing disabilities, yet the entire country has only one state school for deaf children. The School for the Deaf (La Escuelita Para Sordos) is a pilot program designed to demonstrate what's possible when deaf children receive quality education. The goal is to show Peru's Ministry of Education a model that works and would pave the way for state funded schools throughout the country.

We have a direct link to this school through Jon Raber, our missionary at Peace and Hope international. We have supported this school through the Stouffer fund and have joined other churches to help this school grow. We are blessed to be a blessing!

Joyce Ray



**Peace and Hope
International**

HELPING HANDS

2026 Council

President: Mike Ross
 Vice President: Gary Kennedy
 Secretary: Marianne Kennedy
 Treasurer: Sally Herritt
 Pastor: Jane Nicholson
 Deacon: Freda Dorand
 Jeff Dorand
 Lori Palmer
 Mary Beth McGraw-Warne
 Gerry Wilson
 Financial Secretary: Carol McCoy



Nancy Shoop	02/02
Kelci Depner	02/04
John Hubner	02/05
Lisa Sekel	02/10
Melodie Lensbower	02/10
Diane Boock	02/12
Gloria Hammond	02/12
Kay Feight	02/17
Alexis Rankin	02/18
Dawson McCoy	02/18
Mary Beth McGraw Warne	02/19
Bob Wildeson	02/22
Patricia Dent	02/24
Tara Savary	02/27

PRAYER CHAIN

May we include you in our prayers? Do you have a prayer need that we can help you with? If so, please call our prayer chain group leader:

Marcia Hunt @
 717-263-0781

Names are kept on the prayer chain for 1 month. After that month, please contact the office again if you would like to have a name on for another month.

TRANSPORTATION

Need a Ride?

Our church provides transportation to church on Sundays!

Please call if you need a ride. Church office: 717-264-2015



**Deadline for
 the March
 Newsletter
 will be
February 15**



FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

43 W. Washington Street

Chambersburg, PA 17201

E-mail: felccoffice@gmail.com

Website: www.felcc.org



@FirstEvangelicalLutheranChurch

@felccyouth



Church Office Hours

Monday-Thursday

9 a.m.-1 p.m.

CHURCH OFFICE	717-264-2015
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Parish Administrator	ext. 1
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Director of Music	ext. 3
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Pastor	ext. 4
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Lent begins on

*Ash
Wednesday*

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

February 18

9:30, 5:30, and 7:00 p.m.

