FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

First News First

Volume 61, Issue 11 November 2026

November invites us to pause and reflect on the many ways God is at work in our lives. As the seasons change and the days grow shorter, we are reminded of the rhythms of faith: remembering those who have gone before us, giving thanks for the blessings we have received, and looking ahead with hope to what God has yet to do among us.

As we remember the saints who have shaped our faith and our lives, we give thanks for the witness they have left behind. Their love, their prayers, their acts of kindness, and their faithfulness have helped form the people we are today. We carry their stories with us, trusting in the promise that, in Christ, death does not have the final word. We are held together in the communion of saints, united by a love that reaches beyond the boundaries of time and place.

November is also a season of gratitude. As we celebrate the abundance of God's creation and gather around tables of thanksgiving, we are reminded that all we have is a gift. Gratitude invites us to look beyond what we may lack and recognize the many ways God provides for us through family, friends, neighbors, and our church community. It also calls us to share those blessings with others, especially those who are struggling, lonely, or in need of care.

Here at First Lutheran, we have many reasons to give thanks. We are grateful for the people who worship, serve, teach, sing, give, encourage, and quietly care for one another. The life of a congregation is built through these countless acts of faithfulness. Each contribution matters, and together they help us live out our calling to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world.

As we look toward the future, we are also reminded that the church is always being called to listen, discern, and grow. There are decisions to make, opportunities to consider, and ministries to strengthen. We may not always know exactly where the road will lead, but we can move forward with confidence that God is present among us. Our task is to approach these moments with prayerful hearts, generous spirits, and a willingness to seek God's direction together.

And then, even as November draws to a close, the season of Advent begins. Once again, we will enter that holy time of waiting and preparation, listening for the promise of Christ's coming into a world that so deeply needs his peace, mercy, and love. Advent reminds us that hope is not simply wishful thinking; it is trust in God's faithfulness, even when the way ahead is uncertain.

May this November be a time of remembrance that comforts us, gratitude that opens our hearts, and hope that strengthens our faith. May we continue to care for one another, serve our neighbors, and share the love of Christ in all that we do.

With gratitude for you and for the ministry we share,

Pastor Jane Nicholson

WORSHIP

November 1 All Saints Sunday with Holy Communion

November 8 Supply Pastor – The Rev. Bill Nienstedt

November 15 Harvest Home Sunday with Communion and *Of The Land and Seasons* Liturgy.

November 22 Christ the King Sunday with Holy Communion. Following worship - Congregational Meeting to elect council, receive a building update from our Congregation President, vote on revisions to our constitution.

November 29 First Sunday of Advent. The Rev. Matthew Kayhart is supply Pastor.

ALL SAINTS SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2026

If you have a loved one who has entered the church triumphant between November 1, 2025 and October 31, 2026 whom you would like to have remembered by name on All Saints Sunday, please contact the church office and include the spelling of the name, and date of death if available. felccoffice@gmail.com Please submit by Sunday, October 25.

HARVEST HOME

Sunday, November 15, 2026

Please plan to share the bounty of your table with others through the Meals on Wheels program.

The following food items are needed:

- *Medium Noodles*
- *Small jars of Alfredo Sauce*
- *Sugar Free Canned Fruit*
- *White Cake Mixes*
- *Grapenut Cereal*
- *Low Salt Chicken Broth*
- *Dark Colored Dish Cloths*
- *Egg Noodles*
- *Rotini Noodles & Spaghetti Sauce*
- *Canned Vegetables (especially green beans & carrots)*
- *Macaroni*
- *Sugar Free Cookies*
- *Monetary donations*

Donations may be brought to the sanctuary *Sunday, November 15* or deposited outside the church office door in Memorial Hall. Please place any monetary contributions in an envelope marked for Meals on Wheels.

Christmas Worship

First Lutheran will be having worship services on Thursday, December 24 at 3 pm and 7 pm. The two services will be similar. The 3 pm service will be completed prior to dusk, for safe driving home. We will not have worship at the church on Friday, December 25.

Advent Worship

We will be lighting the advent wreath for the season. If you would like to lead a portion of this with either offering to read a devotional piece or light candles, please let the pastor know. Often times families help with this. It could also be a couple of friends working together. The cantata will be on December 20 during worship. The ChambersBellFest will be at St. John on Sunday, December 13 in the evening. Hope you will be able to join us.

Christmas Poinsettias

We will be decorating the Chancel with poinsettias for Christmas. Anyone who wishes to place a poinsettia in the church may do so in honor of or in memory of relatives, friends, and loved ones, or to the Glory of God. Poinsettia order forms are included in the newsletter. The deadline for poinsettia orders is November 30th. Poinsettias will be $10 each.

THANKSGIVING

The church office will be closed November 25 and 26 for the Thanksgiving Holiday. The bulletin deadline for November 29 will be on Monday, November 23.

On the Sunday after Thanksgiving, we will have **a break for our Sunday School** teachers, students, and those who serve coffee and donuts each week. We will **NOT** be having SUNDAY SCHOOL or COFFEE and DONUTS on November 29. We give thanks for the dedication of these servants of the Lord throughout the school year.

THANK YOU

to the Congregational Council and all the members of First Lutheran Church for the beautiful reformation stole presented to me on October 18 in honor of my 30th ordination anniversary. It is an honor to serve God in this place with you. You are dear and special people working in the world to share God's love. I am humbled by the opportunity to be your pastor. Again – thank you so very much.

Pastor Nicholson

RECEIVING NEW MEMBERS

First Lutheran will be receiving new members on Sunday, December 13 during the 10:45 worship service. If you have an interest in or questions about becoming a member of First Lutheran, please speak with Pastor Nicholson.

BIRTHDAY BAGS

bring joy to Little Daisy's Closet recipients! Supplies needed: large birthday bags, paper plates, napkins, balloons, candles, cake pans, cake mixes, icings, and snack items. Thank you for your support!

Joyce Ray

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Wednesday, November 18 at 8:30 a.m.

Wayne Avenue Family Diner

located at
1131 Wayne Ave.
Chambersburg
(the old Bob Evans building)

LADIES BREAKFAST

Thursday, November 12 at 1:00 p.m.

Meeting Room One

We are studying the women of the Bible. Jean Reed is leading the Bible Study.

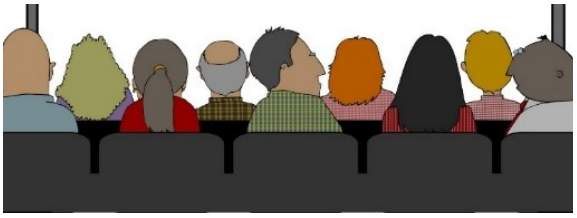
All ladies welcome!

WELCA MEETING

In-Gathering Sunday

Because of your generosity, we have been able to make 60 school kits, 60 baby kits, 106 health kits, 22 fabric kits, and 142 quilts for those in need.

CONGREGATION MEETING



First Lutheran will be having a congregational meeting on Sunday, November 22 following the 10:45 worship service. The purpose of this meeting will be: to elect council members to serve a three year congregational council term beginning January 1, 2027, receive an update regarding our building, and vote on revisions to the constitution as recommended by the Congregation Council and the ELCA. These revisions may be found on the church website at felcc.org. Click on the resources button and then on the constitution revisions. Anywhere there are highlights means that revisions are recommended. Printed copies are currently available in the church office and will be placed at the entrances to the sanctuary on November 8.

COUNCIL NOMINATIONS

First Lutheran Church is in need of persons who are willing and able to serve on the Congregation Council from January 1, 2027 through December 31, 2029.

Please pray about serving in this leadership capacity.

If you are feeling called to serve on our governing body,

please speak with Marianne Kennedy, Gerry Wilson, or Jeff Dorand or another council member.

STEWARDSHIP

THANK YOU

to everyone who has returned their anticipated giving cards for the 2027 year. You are still welcome to offer it to God by placing it in the offering plate or mailing it to the church office.

END OF YEAR GIVING

It is that time of year again. First Lutheran will be receiving gifts through Sunday, December 27 for the 2026 calendar year. We are grateful for the many gifts and ways of giving that we have already received this year and give thanks to God that the Holy Spirit has placed it on your heart to contribute to the ministry of First Lutheran.

NEIGHBORHOOD TASK TEAM

HATS, SCARVES AND MITTENS

Hanging time is here again! The Neighborhood Task Team is planning to hang items that will help our neighbors stay warm in the winter months. These items will be hung on the church fence. What can you do to help with this project? Purchase new or donate gently used hats, scarves and mittens for men, women and children to donate to this project. Share this with your friends, relatives and neighbors. Volunteer to hang items on the fence. Dates are November 1, December 6, and January 16-18. Contact Mary Beth Warne McGraw at 717-372-8282.

CHRISTMAS COOKIES The Franklin County Jail Ministry is asking local churches to join together and help provide HOME-MADE COOKIES for the inmates. You may deliver cookies to Salem United Brethren Church Fellowship Hall (4349 Letterkenny Road) (717-263-4123) on December 7 to 11 from 9 a.m.to 3 p.m. OR you may drop them off in the First Lutheran Church office by Sunday, December 6 and the NTT Team will deliver them. Help is also needed to sort and package the cookies on Friday, December 11 at 6:00 p.m. at Salem UBC. The cookies will be delivered to the inmates on Sunday, December 13 by the chaplain and his team. Thank you for your contributions.

FIRST RESPONDERS THANK YOU Greater Chambersburg Chamber of Commerce invites you to join them as they celebrate the men and women who serve our community in their 12th annual First Responders Appreciation Day! Contributions are being received at First Lutheran until Sunday, December 6. These donations will be distributed by the Chamber of Commerce to the local stations in Franklin County. The donations will bring holiday cheer and to show our gratitude.

Here's how you can help:

Donate any of the following items:
Monetary Donations for extra supplies

Snacks/beverages that are individually wrapped such as: Granola/protein bars, gum, nuts/trail mix, mints, cheese and peanut butter crackers, beef jerky, candy, donuts, chips, drink powder packets, sports drinks, microwave popcorn

Supplies for the station such as large cans of coffee, K-cups, hand sanitizer, little memo books, sticky notes, highlighters, black ink pens, lip balm.

Council Highlights

Worship
- Thank you to Tim Gotwald for his work with the choir in Freda's absence.

Stewardship
- Thank you to all who helped to lead and respond to the stewardship campaign, *Awakened Heart, Generous Lives.* Special thanks to Tim Gotwald, Nancy Fricke, and Joyce Ray for their stewardship messages.

Finance:
- Reviewed Budget recommendations for 2027.

Long Range Planning
- McKissick Architects are preparing a Historic Structures Report.
- A local church is in need of more space. They have toured our building. Mike Ross is going to be speaking with them to further discern what they are looking for and to see if our facility might match their needs.

Evangelism:
- We will receive new members on December 13. Letters have been sent to perspective members.
- Committee is planning a lunch for the committee, staff, and new members.

Records:
- Voted to receive the letter of transfer for Marilyn Houke from St. Luke Lutheran Church in Williamson.
- Death of Harold Forrester September 16, 2026

Administration:
- Nominating Committee of Gerry Wilson, Marianne Kennedy, and Jeff Dorand are seeking out council members for a three year term beginning in January of 2027.

Chambersburg Emergency Shelter Services (ChESS):
- Tim Gotwald provided information regarding the need for additional shelter for the homeless in extremely cold weather. ChESS is being created by a coalition in our community. It will operate in partnership with Maranatha Cold Weather Shelter and will serve adults in our community.
  - *ChESS is looking for several buildings with 800 sq. feet of space and restrooms near the space. The buildings would be used on a rotating basis by week. ChESS space would only be used if the weather is extreme and the regular shelter of Maranatha is full. Maranatha will screen the clients.
  - *A paid employee would be at the ChESS Shelter when it is open. Volunteers will be needed as well. Tim has volunteer forms.
  - *Financial contributions appreciated to provide cots, linens, paid staff, etc.

Pertinent Constitution Points
- "The Congregation Council shall not have authority to buy, sell, or encumber real property unless specifically authorized to do so by a meeting of the congregation." (C12.05b)
- Constitution Changes Summary – see Constitution C16.04 for complete verbiage.
  Changes to bring us in conformity with the Model Constitution of the ELCA need approval by majority vote. No second vote is needed because of aligning ourselves with the model constitution.
- Voting Member Definition Summary – see Constitution C8.02c for complete verbiage.
  A voting member of the congregation is a member who is confirmed and who during the current or preceding calendar year has communed in this congregation and made a contribution of record to this congregation.

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

PRAYER CHAIN

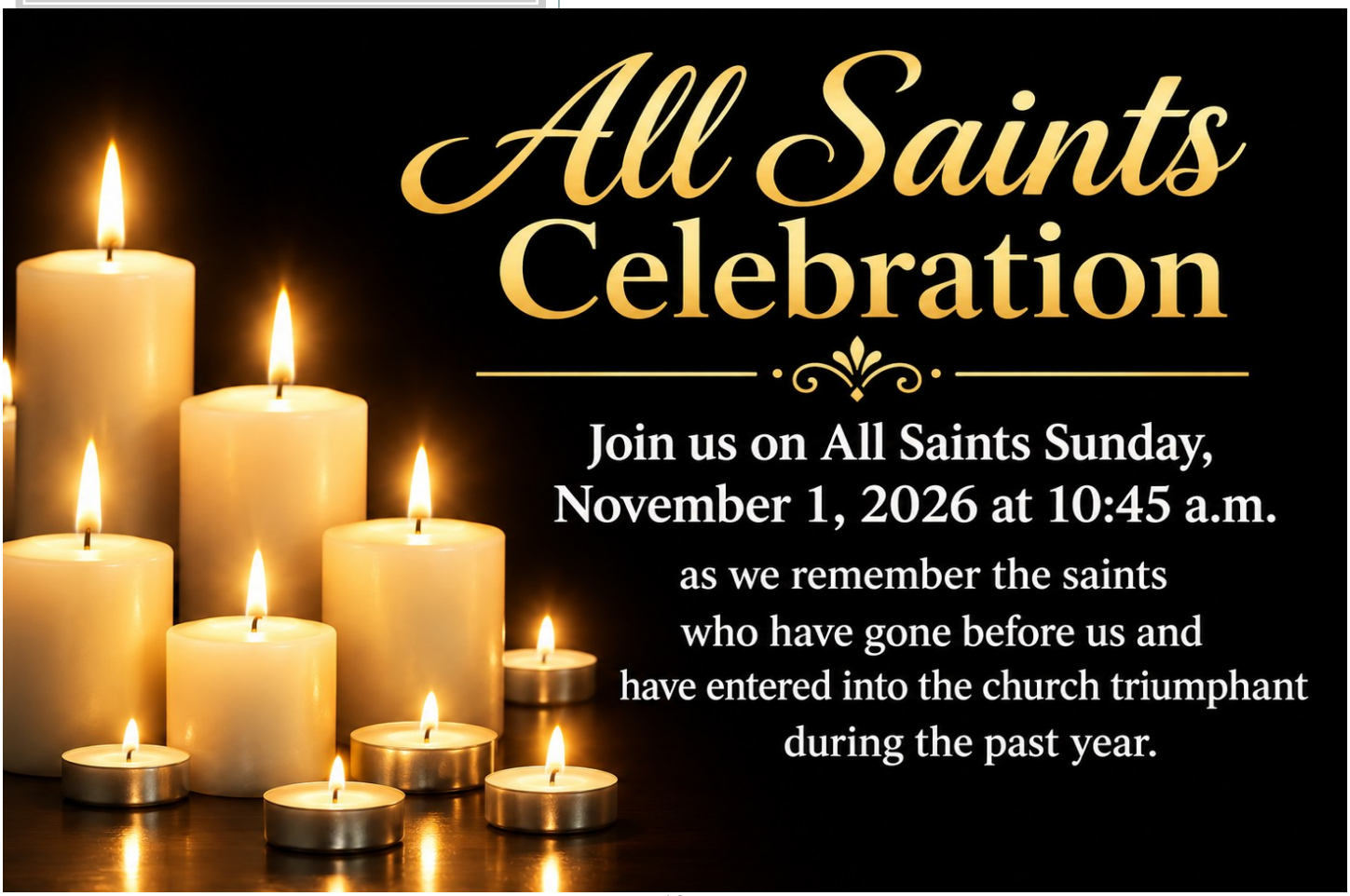
May we include you in our prayers? Do you have a prayer need that we can help you with? If so, please call our prayer chain group leader: Marcia Hunt @ 717-263-0781
Names are kept on the prayer chain for 1 month. After that month, please contact the office again if you would like to have a name on for another month.

Nancy Lawyer	11/01	Peggy Stout	11/14
Rebecca Hoover	11/01	Bill Nienstedt	11/17
Debra Fleegal	11/04	Dorothy Hammer	11/20
Patti Nitterhouse	11/04	Gary Kennedy	11/21
Bill Coy	11/05	Nicki Johnson	11/21
Joan Thorpe	11/05	Barb Evans	11/23
Sharan Carbaugh	11/06	Andrew Hefner	11/25
Jeff Dorand	11/08	Bob Lawyer	11/25
Mary Gotwald	11/09		
Debra Umbrell-Tressler			11/29

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 December Newsletter will be November 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
Parish Administrator	ext. 1
Director of Music	ext. 3
Pastor	ext. 4