

First News First

Volume 61, Issue 3

March 2026

As we enter the season of Lent, we are invited once again into a sacred journey — a journey of reflection, repentance, renewal, and hope. Lent reminds us of our deep need for God’s grace and of the abundant mercy we receive through Jesus Christ. This year, our Wednesday evening Lenten worship will center on the theme:

“Living Water in a Dry Land.”

We live in a world that can often feel dry and divided. Voices compete for attention. Differences can seem sharper than ever. Yet into this dryness, Christ speaks words of life. He offers living water that refreshes weary hearts, heals broken relationships, and draws us back into communion with God and with one another.

One of the most beautiful ways we experience that living water is through worship shared with fellow Christians from other denominations. During our Wednesday Lenten services, we will gather not only as members of our own congregation, but alongside brothers and sisters in Christ from neighboring churches. In a time when division is so visible in our world, these gatherings are a quiet but powerful witness to the unity we share in Christ.

Jesus prayed that his followers would be one. When we come together in prayer, song, and reflection, we live out that prayer. We are reminded that what binds us together is stronger than what separates us. We drink from the same living water. We are sustained by the same grace.



— THE SEASON OF —
LENT

I encourage you to make these Wednesday evening services a priority in your Lenten journey. Come and be refreshed. Come and be strengthened by shared worship and fellowship. Come and experience the gift of Christian unity in a world that so deeply needs to see it. February 25 and March 4 we are at Corpus Christi. On March 11 we will gather at First Lutheran. On March 18 we meet at Trinity Lutheran. And on March 25 we will be at Trinity Episcopal. Soup will be at 5:30 at each of these locations and Worship will be at 7:00.

May this Lenten season open our hearts to God’s renewing presence and lead us ever more deeply into the life that Christ offers — abundant, gracious, and overflowing like living water in a dry land.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Jane Nicholson

Phone Number Change: Pastor Jane and Mark Nicholson have disconnected their home landline. Please use 757-642-1425 to reach pastor and 757-642-1424 to reach Mark.



Sunday, March 1	Worship with Holy Communion
Wednesday, March 4	LARC Worship 7:00 p.m. soup 5:30 p.m. at Corpus Christ (they are hosting twice)
Sunday, March 8	Worship
Wednesday, March 11	LARC Worship 7:00 p.m. soup 5:30 p.m. at First Lutheran
Sunday, March 15	Worship with Holy Communion
Wednesday, March 18	LARC Worship 7:00 p.m. soup 5:30 p.m. at Trinity Lutheran
Sunday, March 22	Worship
Wednesday, March 25	LARC Worship 7:00 p.m. soup 5:30 p.m. at Trinity Episcopal
Sunday, March 29	Palm Sunday with Holy Communion
Thursday, April 2	Maundy Thursday 7:00 p.m. with Holy Communion and Stripping of the Altar
Friday, April 3	Good Friday 7:00 p.m. Tenebrae Worship
Sunday, April 5	9:00 a.m. Easter Breakfast 10:00 a.m. Egg Hunt 10:45 a.m. Easter Worship

LENTEN OFFERING of First Lutheran Church will be given to the Discretionary Fund to help people with rent and utility bills.

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

Long Range Planning

Contract with Vern McKissick-Architect for historic buildings-Facility Analysis.

Contract Proposal with Pinnacle Services to help us find grant money for stained glass window.

Executive meeting with Trinity Lutheran Church. Invited Trinity Lutheran Church to the Pancake/Sausage Brunch and Variety Show.

Property

Building usage with Anglican Church. Waiting for paperwork from them.

Building usage with Cumberland Valley School of Music (CVSM). Potentially renting three rehearsal rooms off of the chapel space. Using rear of chapel for a waiting area for parents and siblings. Using two of our pianos (the ones currently in the Fellowship Hall), CVSM would be responsible for tuning them and using meeting room 2 for their board meeting every other month. Perhaps once or twice a year use sanctuary for recital.

Faith Formation

Sunday, March 1, 2026: Pancake/Sausage Brunch and Variety Show to follow worship.

Administration

Synod Assembly is Friday, June 5, 2026 through Saturday, June 6, 2026 at St. Matthew in York, PA. If anyone from the congregation would like to attend as a voting member from First Lutheran, please speak with Pastor Nicholson.

LARC Lenten Worship

At First Lutheran on March 11. Contact Barb Evans at 717-360-2535 to bring soup

LARC Lent Offering going to Hearken House, transitional housing for those released from prison.

THRIVENT WEBINAR

Pastor Nicholson attended a Thrivent Webinar at the end of January.

Here are the learnings:

1. **If you were a Thrivent Beneficiary Member in 2025 please remember to direct your “Choice Dollars” by March 31, 2026.** Please consider directing those dollars to First Lutheran ASAP. The dollars that are not designated by the end of March 2026 will be lost. You can designate your dollars by going to www.thrivent.com or calling 1-800-847-4836 and say “Choice Dollars.” In 2025 First Lutheran received \$1146 from Choice Dollars. Thank you.

2. **In April 2026 Choice Dollars are changing!**
 - a. No matter your investments or insurance plan with Thrivent you will be eligible for “Choice Dollars.” There are no longer exclusions.
 - b. In **April of 2026** you will have access to the entirety of your Annual 2026 Choice Dollars. They are going to put them in your account immediately for you to spend anytime during the remainder of the year. In 2026 these “Choice Dollars” must be spent by **December 31, 2026** or they will be lost.
 - c. **Moving forward**, you will have access to the entirety of your Annual “Choice Dollars” on the first of the calendar year. They must be spent by December 31 of that year or they will be lost.

3. **Action Team money** is available to all Thrivent members.
 - a. Those with investments have access to one per year.
 - b. Those with insurance plans have access to two per year.
 - c. Those who would like to be **Associate Members have access to one per year at a cost of \$25 to become an Associate Member.** The grants are for up to \$250. (Yes, your money has 10 times the value if you become an associate member and apply for a grant – some people in the quilting group did this in 2025.)

Continue reading on next page



The grant money has been used for Service and Education at First Lutheran. In the past these have included:

- I. Food for Vacation Bible School
- II. Food for youth fund raisers and variety shows
- III. Books to be distributed to children for Christmas gifts
- IV. Bus to go to the National Cathedral for Reformation Worship
- V. Lots of fabric, thread, and backing for quilts
- VI. Mittens and hats for the annual give away
- VII. Personal care and food items for the Give and Take Box
- VIII. Poinsettias for our homebound
- IX. Technical Equipment for online worship
- X. Socks for the homeless shelter
- XI. Socks and Underwear for 'Back to School' event.
- XII. Towels for the 'Personal Care Kits' for 'God's Work, Our Hands'

The ministries of First Lutheran have benefitted by over \$4000 in 2025. Thank you for using this benefit to maximize our work in the community and in our world. It is greatly appreciated.

NEIGHBORHOOD TASK TEAM

Sharing God's love in our community

BIRTHDAY BAGS

Everyone likes to have their birthday celebrated, but when family funds are limited, it does not always happen. Little Daisy's Closet hands out birthday bags to people so their families can have a memorable celebration. We are collecting cake mixes, packaged icing, birthday napkins, balloons, and a disposable baking pan for each bag. If you would like to contribute, please place items in the container outside the main office door. Questions? Contact Joyce Ray.



Give and Take Box:

Please continue to donate canned and other unperishable foods for the Give and Take Box. Our neighbors appreciate your generosity!

Thank you!

SCOUT SUNDAY

EVENTS



1 NIGHT—3 HOURS Just for Women

An evening full of laughter, learning, stories & music.

**Friday, April 17 at Ringgold Church
in Smithsburg, MD**

6:00 p.m. Doors open | 7:00 p.m. Show
Purchase tickets at 480-812-1100 or online
at: ASPIREWOMENSEVENTS.com

The Lutheran Churches work together to collect furniture and give it to families in need. If you have any furniture, they would like to have the opportunity to come and look at it to see if it can be used. There is a storage unit for the items until needed. If you have furniture to contribute, please contact Don Greer at Trinity Lutheran Church 717-263-8156.



WOMEN'S MINISTRY

The Women of the ELCA (WELCA)

will gather for Bible Study
and fellowship on
**Thursday, March 12th at
1:00 p.m. in Meeting Room 1.**

We continue our study of the Women of the Bible Speak. We have been learning about some of the women in the Bible that are not so famous but still important. Jean Reed will lead the discussion on LEAH. We would love to have you join us for the short study followed by snacks and Fellowship time.

WOMEN'S BREAKFAST

The Women's Fellowship Breakfast

will be held at 8:30 a.m.
on March 18th at
Johnnie's Restaurant

All Ladies are Welcome!

EASTER FLOWERS



We invite you to celebrate the Resurrection through gifts of flowers to decorate our Sanctuary on Easter Sunday. The variety of potted flowers available for this year's Easter celebration include tulips, lilies, hyacinths, azaleas and hydrangeas.

Potted flowers may be picked up after the 10:45 a.m. service on Easter morning. Order forms are available on the table in the back of the sanctuary. Orders are due by Wednesday, March 4th.



SUMMER CAMPS



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.

SUMMER CAMP OPEN HOUSE at Kirchenwald and Nawakwa on Sunday, March 15 and Sunday, April 12 from 2:00-4:30 p.m. Meet some of the Summer Camp Staff and take a tour of the camp. For more information, visit www.LutheranCamping.org or call the camping office at 717-677-8211.

WORK DAYS AT CAMP NAWAKWA on Saturday, April 11 at 9:00 a.m. Volunteers needed to do general housekeeping, gardening, painting, carpentry, and other tasks. A noon meal will be provided. So that enough food can be prepared, please RSVP at LutheranCamping.org or call 717-677-8211.

NIGHT FOR NAWAKWA join us at camp April 25th to raise funds for Nawakwa. Family activities will be from 4-6, worship will be from 5:30-6, dinner will be at 6, and entertainment will be from 7-9.



The Lutheran Camping Corporation
of Central Pennsylvania
Kirchenwald, Nawakwa, & The Wittel Farm

Thank You...

Dear First Evangelical,

Thank you for your contribution to the Diaper Depot of \$500.00

With Gratitude,
Central Presbyterian Church

Dear First Evangelical Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your support of Pregnancy Ministries. Your generosity is such a blessing and will make a difference in the lives of teens, women, and their families here in our community.

Abundant Blessings,
Susie Barry, Executive Director

Dear Church Family,

Sincerest thanks for the red rose from the ELCA, for all of the phone calls, and for the visits from Pastor Nicholson during my hospitalization. Thank you for all the expressions of thoughts and prayers from the congregation. Our church family is such a real blessing to us!

Sincerely,
Dalton and Julie Paul

First Evangelical Lutheran Church,

On behalf of the staff and board of directors at NETwork Ministries, thank you for your generous financial support to NETwork Ministries, as we continue to share in the love of Jesus with those who are most vulnerable in our community and equip youth with skills for life.

Sincerely,
Tammy Timmons, Fiscal Assistant

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for your gift of \$150.00 to Lutheran World Relief's Quilt and Kit Shipping Fund. Your generosity today will ensure that these lovingly handmade blessings reach the people who need them most. I am so grateful for your dedication to blanketing the world with the peace of Christ...until your love reaches every neighbor.

In Christ,
Daniel V. Speckhard, President and CEO

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



MARCH

BIRTHDAYS

Alexander Goodman	03/01
Sally Herritt	03/02
Kimberly Martin	03/04
Tyler Johnson	03/04
Joseph Hunt	03/06
Rubens Paul	03/10
Geoffrey Craven	03/12
Tedd Sloan	03/16
Aiden Peters	03/17
Wayne Brensinger	03/18
William McCoy	03/18
Luke Cody	03/19
Karen Goodman	03/20
Ralph Burdick	03/20
Chandler Shearer	03/23

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 April
 Newsletter
 will be
March 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.

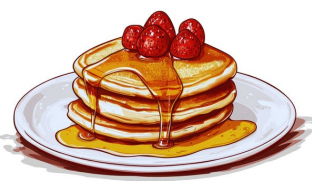
CHURCH OFFICE	717-264-2015
Parish Administrator	ext. 1
Director of Music	ext. 3
Pastor	ext. 4



March 1st Following Worship around 11:45

This is a fundraiser 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.