

First Lutheran Church
92 W. Walnut Street
Washington, PA 15301



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ICH-THUS
Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior

Pastoral Perspectives for December 2025

Grace and peace to you from God the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit.

“O Lord how shall I greet You, and welcome You aright?” These are the first words from Rev. Paul Gerhardt’s beautiful Advent hymn composed in 1653. This is the hymn of the day which Martin Luther created for the *Deutsche Messe* (German Mass). This hymn was still popular in JS Bach’s time and was used in his Christmas Oratorio. It is based on St. Matthew 21:1-9 and that is where Gerhardt based his text. Sadly, the creators of the cranberry hymnal, trimmed this hymn from 9 verses down to 4! (Shame, shame, shame!)

This reminds me of how the world rushes through this season of Advent to get to Christmas in a mad dash and has little time for gathering, awaiting and worshipping the true reason for the season which is Jesus the Christ!

I love the old hymns as each one is a complete sermon within itself as they are Bible-based. They often tell of our joys and sorrows and how our Lord Jesus must be the One we turn to for that is the only place our salvation can be found!

At First Lutheran we will gather midweek (Wed 7pm) in the darkness of the evening to be reminded that Jesus is the Light of the World! As we prepare for His birth and for His return. Only God the Father knows the date of His Son’s return and the opening verse asks **“O Lord how shall I greet You, and welcome You aright?”**

How should we greet Him? Well Rev. Paul Gerhardt beautifully answered the question **“Your people long to greet you, my hope, my heart’s delight”.**

Join us this Advent and Christmas and be open to how the Holy Spirit is calling you as Gerhardt reminds us exactly where we are to focus our attention and our hearts as he penned **“O kindle, Lord most holy, Your lamp with-in my breast to do in Spirit lowly all that may please You best.”**

Rev. Robert B. Grewe

Important Dates for December

Dec. 3rd Wednesday at 7 pm the 1st Midweek Advent service

Dec. 7th Second Sunday in Advent with **St. Nicholas** (Dec. 6th feast day) visit and special coffee hour to follow after the service with photos of St. Nicholas in the basement hall.

Dec. 10th Wednesday at 7 pm Midweek Advent service with FLC council meeting to follow.

Dec. 14th Third Sunday in Advent service with children's Sunday school and **St. Lucia** (Dec. 13th feast day) visit with gingersnap cookies.

Dec. 17th Wednesday at 7 pm 3rd Midweek Advent service.

Dec. 21st Fourth Sunday in Advent 9:30 am **Breakfast at the Manager** in the basement hall, and the **gift card sleigh** will be drawn on the first day of winter. Readers are needed for the Nativity Story.

Dec. 22nd FLC Newsletter article due.

Dec. 23rd No adult catechism classes until Dec 30th.

Dec. 24th Christmas Eve service with prelude at 8:30 pm with service starting at 9 pm with the Lord's Supper.

Dec. 25th -27th Church closed.

Dec. 28th First Sunday after Christmas with children's Sunday school and Movie and a Meal to follow.



Dear First Lutheran Church Family,

Advent is here! I hope to see you at our mid-week Advent services. It is a beautiful service and a wonderful way to end the day during Advent. Please see the newsletter for the schedule of our Advent services and other activities.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God . -Ephesians 2:8a

How will you use your perfect gift? Council as opted for First Lutheran to personally help one family in need this holiday season. We have found a family who is in need where the wife had to quit her job to help take care of her ailing mother. This has been hard on the family emotionally and financially. There is a “Giving Box” in the back of the sanctuary for donations to help this family with things they need (utility bill paid, or grocery store gift card). Your small donation will go a long way in helping this local family.

We will have our 2nd annual Corny 5K August 2026. Plans are starting to be made so that this fundraiser will be just as successful as our first one. Please consider joining the committee to help. If you have any suggestions for any new fundraisers, please let Pastor our council know. We welcome any new ideas.

As you are busy this December with all of the extra holiday activities, please don't forget to send in your monthly donation. Church Council does their best to anticipate upcoming expenses, but Council cannot predict how much snow we will have or when a toilet may need replaced. Your regular monthly donations go a long way in helping with the extra expenses that we have.

This year, don't let your faith end up like a jaunty Christmas tie, hanging unused in the closet. Make the most of it and live into the new, abundant life Jesus promises to us all. It's the number one stewardship lesson.

Merry Christmas,

Jennifer Black, FLC Council President

TREASURER'S REPORT—DECEMBER 2025

Greetings to the Congregation,

Congratulations, the year end numbers are in and we had a great giving year, up over 9% from 2024. We were up across the board all categories, everyone deserves a big thank you for this continuing support, which allows us to continue to take care of our soon to be 100 year old building.

Pastor Grewe has been tremendous in not losing his cool when it comes to our sound system. We continue to work on fixing it for now and into the future. Some upgrades are working even though it may not **SOUND** like it. We are trying our best to do it with volunteer help that are not members of the church, but they are more than qualified. Our music director Matt and I are getting closer to a positive outcome.

If you were not able to stay for the congregational meeting, I discussed ways to help us grow our support even more for 2026, addition by subtraction. Upside is a phone app that acts like a discount coupon, you can save on gasoline with every fill up, you can save on groceries and also eating out. Those savings can be donated to the church without affecting your personal budget, it just takes a little effort.

Coming soon in 2026, I will hold a gathering for anyone who wants to learn more about how to save, budget, conserve, invest etc. We can put all of our gray matter together to find those opportunities we may be missing out on.

Also coming in 2026 we hope to get moving on our next phase of taking care of our building, the front steps and sidewalks are in desperate need of repair and we hope to tackle that in the spring.

May All be Well,

Ron

100th Anniversary 2026

The children of the church are busy in Sunday School with their project for our Anniversary Celebrations.

The committee is busy arranging our memorabilia for display, we are hoping to start a small display in the narthex beginning in January and changing each month. The complete display will be in the social room downstairs by June.

The memorial ornament is now on sale for \$20. If you are interested in purchasing one or more, please contact Heather Quedenfeld or Linda Coleman. If you are not able to attend church service, we will take steps to deliver them to you.

Heather 724-263-3253 heather.quedenfeld@comcast.net

Linda Coleman 724-225-8011 ljcjmc@comcast.net

On June 21, 2026, the Bishop and his wife will join us for church service and the catered banquet after the service in the church social room. **Put the date on your 2026 calendar.**

We have a beautiful church and a wonderful congregation.

LET US CELEBRATE

Anniversary Committee, Linda Coleman, Heather Quedenfeld, Judy Sarver, Michelle Williams, Sonie Rea, Sally Lacko

WNALC

The Women's Circle will meet Thursday, Dec. 4 at noon. Please bring a covered dish and a \$5.00 grab bag gift.

After lunch we will work on Cheer Baskets for our shut ins.

All women are welcome.

Have a Blessed Christmas
and a Happy New Year

Sonie

Clock of Life

The clock of life is wound but once
And no man has the power
To Tell just when the hands will stop
Not late or early hour
Now is the only time you own
Live, love, toil with a will
Place no faith in tomorrow for
The clock may then be still

Fundraiser Reminders!

Sarris Candy Sale Pick up Sunday, November 23, 2025 before/after service Profit made going to the Restoration Fund: \$899.87

Wreath Sale Pick up Saturday, November 29, 2025 from 9 am - 11 am Profit made going to the Restoration Fund: \$228.50

Any questions contact Vickie Group (724)344-0565

Breakfast at the Manger

Date: Sunday, December 21

Time: 9:30 AM

Location: Social Room

Join us for a warm and joyful morning as we celebrate the season together! Our **Breakfast at the Manger** is a special time of fellowship, delicious food, and reflection on the true meaning of Christmas.

Bring your family and friends to enjoy a hearty breakfast and the spirit of community as we gather around the manger to remember the gift of Christ's birth. This is a wonderful opportunity to connect, share, and prepare our hearts for the coming of Christmas.

We look forward to seeing you there.

GIFT CARD TREE FUNDRAISER

Church Council will once again sponsor the Gift Card Tree. Last year gift cards on the tree were valued at approx. \$690 and a profit of \$795 was made on the sale of tickets! Anyone can donate a gift card, as I am now accepting them. As I get the cards, I will place them on the tree which will be on displayed in the lounge. This is always a profitable fundraiser for the church and as you know we have 2 projects done, but several more to go. Tickets will be available for purchase in December. Tickets: \$5 for one, \$10 for three. Tickets will be available for purchase through myself and other council members, and you may approach any of us before or after the church service. Winner will be pulled on Sunday, December 21st at the Breakfast at the Manger. Thank you for your support; I look forward to the Holiday Season. I would be happy to answer any questions. Kim Luketich (cell) 724-678-5766, (home)724-222-4610, email: kjluketich@gmail.com

Dear First Lutheran Church Family,

The Church Council has decided to try something new this Christmas season. In lieu of doing the Angel Tree we will be collecting money to help a local family in need. The money will go to help the family purchase food, pay bills, and purchase Christmas presents. This new initiative is called "The Giving Tree." If you are able, please place monetary donations in the box labeled "The Giving Tree" at the rear of the Sanctuary. The family we are helping this year is a family of 4 (mom, dad and 2 young boys). Dad works and mom had to give up her job to help take care of her mom who is very ill. The family is struggling to pay bills and have food in the house. As a church, our goal is to collect enough money to pay a bill, buy food and get the young boys some Christmas gifts. If donating by check, please make it payable to First Lutheran Church and marked Giving Tree. Any questions, ask a council member!



SAVE THE DATE!

THE SECOND ANNUAL CORNY 5K & 1 MILE RUN/WALK WILL BE HELD ON
AUGUST 15, 2026!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW AND JOIN US FOR A FUN DAY!

**Inaugural Corny 5K & 1 mile
Run/Walk**



August 16, 2025

December Lay Readers

- 7 Denny Lacko
- 14 Dennis Schmidt
- 21 Heather Quedenfeld
- 24 Kimberly Grewe
- 28 Lisa Maust

December Altar Flowers

- 7 Kathleen Black
- 14 Maust's
- 21 Jeff Ulanich
- 28 Sonie Rea

December Acolytes

- 7 TBD
- 14 TBD
- 21 TBD
- 24 TBD
- 28 TBD

December Ushers

- 7 C. Krcil, R. Williams, R. McGoogan
- 14 C. Ringer, D. Schmidt, Z. Mason, M. Verderber
- 21 E. Goga, R. Johnson, J. Ulanich
- 24 TBD
- 28 R. Phillips, J. Sakerka, D. Wheeler, J. Stolfer

December Counters—Alternate: J. Black and L. Sten

- 7 C. Group, V. Group
- 14 L. Coleman, R. Williams
- 21 K. Luketich, D. Schmidt
- 28 R. McGoogan, L. Coleman

December Altar Team

Kris Briggs

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Rick Williams
Chris Maust
- 2 Matthew Mazzotti
Aiden DeWalt
- 3 Sally Caddies
Deborah Sten
- 6 Wyatt Streater
- 7 Jennifer Black
- 8 Mark Black
- 10 Ed Goga
- 11 Thomas Dewalt
- 13 Sally Hazlett
Lorraine Kay Rush
- 16 Judd Lacko
- 21 Jodi Berry
- 22 Jimmy Conkle
John Bartanus, Jr.
- 28 Danielle Pinkerton
- 30 George Walz
Jim Scheffel
- 31 Karen Gavazzi