First Lutheran Church

92 W. Walnut Street

Washington, PA 15301



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Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior

Pastoral Perspectives for December 2026

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

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus, as we come to the end of the year, there is nothing like going out with a bang: a Big Bang! I recently read an article on the anti-Christian stance across the pond; the new saying in England this year will be "Happy Winter!" This way no one will be offended by any kind of religious greeting, and everyone can live in harmony.

In North America the expression "Happy Holidays" is used as a lesser Christian greeting, but what people fail to realize is that the word "holidays" comes from the Old English word "haligdaeg" (holy day) which refers to sacred or traditional days of commemoration such as Christmas, Hanukkah or Easter. Holidays in the secular world mean having a specific day off whereas a vacation means an extended period away from work/school.

As Christians around the world say at this time of year "Merry Christmas" which is a holiday (holyday) greeting used to wish someone joy, happiness and a festive celebration during the Christmas season. In the United Kingdom they used to say "Happy Christmas" as Christians, but I saw comedian Pete Holmes use this greeting in a short clip.

"May the birth of the One and Only True God, Jesus Christ bestow a blessing of peace and grace upon your house to the belittlement of every false religion."

So, there is my going out with a bang! We are now in the season of Advent and we, as believers, await the return of our Lord and will celebrate the birth of the Christ Child Who is our Lord, our Saviour and our Messiah on December 24th.

Kimberly and I wish you a very merry and blessed Christmas in the One in Whom the Holy Day is named after, Jesus the Christ!

Your Servant in Christ. Rev. Robert B. Grewe

Important Dates for December 2026

December 2nd Wednesday at 7 pm: 1st Midweek Advent service

December 6th 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. Children bring your shoes!

December 9th Wednesday at 7 pm: 2nd Midweek Advent service with FLC council meeting to follow.

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

December 14th FLC Newsletter article due

December 16th Wednesday at 7 pm: 3rd Midweek Advent service

December 20st Fourth Sunday in Advent 9:30 am **Breakfast at the Manger** in the basement hall, and the **gift card tree** will be drawn on the first day of winter. Readers needed for the Nativity Story downstairs.

December 22nd No adult catechism classes until Dec. 29th

December 23rd Wednesday at 7pm: 4th Midweek Advent service

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

Church closed Dec. 25th – 26th

December 27th First Sunday after Christmas with children's Sunday school and movie and a meal to follow.



Dear First Lutheran Church Family,

Have yourself a Holy little Christmas

The "Christmas season" seems to begin earlier every year. Some stores had Christmas stuff on the shelves weeks before Halloween. What madness! We go dashing through the stores to the beat of Jingle Bells; and we go "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree" until we crash from exhaustion.

Revelry and gift-giving are fine and fun, but if we're not careful they can snowball out of control. Stewarding a Holy and meaningful Christmas means balancing the commercial with the spiritual. Here are some tips:

Observe Advent: *The four weeks before Christmas Day comprise the Advent Season, a time to prepare for Christmas through prayer, song, worship, and spiritual disciplines. Lean into the spirit of Advent . Advent devotionals can help.*

Observe the Christmas season: *The church calendar lists the season of Christmas from Dec. 24 to the feast of Epiphany on Jan. 6. Until the 20th century, these 12 Days of Christmas were the time for celebration and partying. Make them special in your life and family.*

Cut the consumerism: *Limit your shopping and spending by setting a strict budget or gifting the people in your life with homemade presents, favors, or ways to spend time together.*

Party hardly: *For some, Christmas is an excuse to overeat and drink to excess. Moderate your consumption.*

Most importantly, pray: *Ask God to help you and your family craft a meaningful and joyful Advent and Christmas. Ask God to send you wisdom, resources, and people who can journey through the spiritual season with you.*

By carefully stewarding your faith life, Advent and Christmas can be a time for real spiritual growth.--(Rob Blezard Copyright © 2022, Rev. Robert Blezard. Reprinted by permission. Rob Blezard is web editor for the Stewardship of Life Institute and pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Aberdeen, MD.

Blessings,

Jennifer Black, FLC council president



Dear First Lutheran Church Family,

The Church Council has decided to do The Giving Tree again 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.

If you are able, please place monetary donations in the box labeled “The Giving Tree” in the back of the church.

The family we are helping this year is a family of 3 (mom and 3 young girls- 8 year old twins and a 10 year old). The mom is a teacher at a school in Pittsburgh. One of the twin girls has ARFID (Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder & OCD). She was down to 35 pounds. She is now in a specialized residential care home in North Carolina. Since being there she has worked up to being 45 pounds. The mom, along with her parents and sister, take turns being in North Carolina with her and being at home with the other 2 girls. The family is struggling financially with things for all 3 girls, food, health care bills, travel and lodging expenses.

As a church, our goal is to collect enough money to buy some Christmas presents for the 3 girls and money to help them with bills, food and other expenses. We will be collecting money donations, gift cards for food, gas and airline tickets. If donating by check, please make it payable to First Lutheran Church and marked Giving Tree. If you would like to purchase a gift for one of the girls, see Caitlyn or Vickie Group for gift ideas.

We will be collecting donations until Sunday, December 13, 2026.

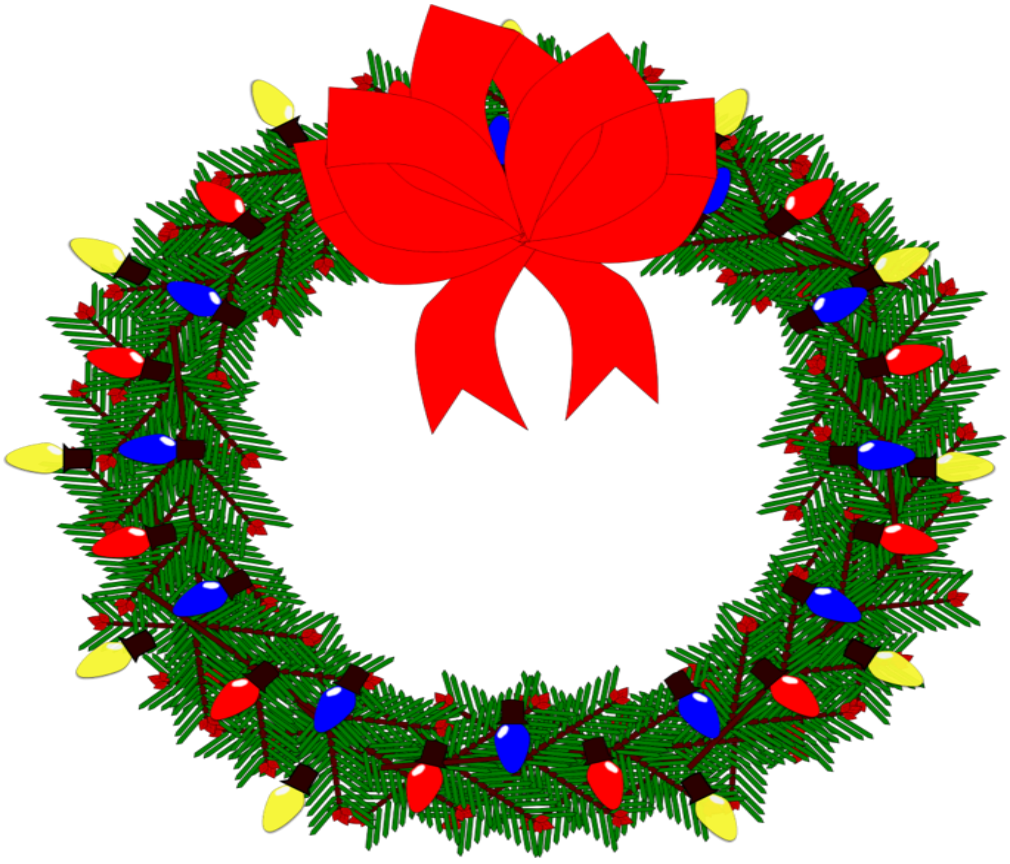


Wreath and Poinsettia Fundraiser Pick-up Reminder

Anyone who ordered from the Wreath & Poinsettia Fundraiser can pick up their items on Saturday, November 28th from 9:00-11:00am at the handicap door.

Any questions please contact Vickie Group - 724.344.0565.

Thank you for all the support with this and the Sarris fundraisers. These two fundraisers raised $1014.00 for the Restoration Fund!



WNALC Newsletter for December

The WNALC will not have a regular Circle meeting. Our meeting will be a covered dish at noon, Thursday, Dec. 3rd. We will play games and fill cheer baskets. Delivery will be Dec. 10.

We wish everyone a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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2026 ANNIVERSARY CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT

There are 19 ornaments left at $20 each. If you are interested, please contact Linda Coleman or you can also contact the church office.

Thank you,

Linda Coleman

December Lay Readers

6 Heather Quedenfeld
13 Ron McGoogan
20 Dennis Schmidt
27 Lisa Maust

December Altar Flowers

6 Kathleen Black
13 Don Hazlett
20 Sonie Rea
27 Jeff Ulanich

December Acolytes

6 TBD
13 TBD
20 TBD
27 TBD

December Ushers

6 J. Sakerka; D. Wheeler; J. Stolfer
13 K. Carl; C. Group; C. R. Group; D. Lacko
20 J. Sarver; T. Stefanik
27 D. Looman; H. Snyder

December Counters—Alternate:

6 C. Group and V. Group
13 L. Sten and R. McGoogan
20 K. Luketich and S. Rea
27 R. Williams and D. Schmidt

December Altar Team

Kris Briggs

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

1 Rick Williams
Chris Maust
2 Matthew Mazzotti
Aiden DeWalt
3 Sally Caddies
Deborah Sten
6 Wyatt Streator
7 Jennifer Black
8 Mark Black
10 Ed Goga
11 Thomas Dewalt
13 Sally Hazlett
Loraine 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