

# First News First

Volume 60, Issue 3

March 2025

Dear Congregation,

**LENT** Welcome to the season of LENT! We begin our journey to the cross of Christ on March 5 with our Ash Wednesday worship. Please join us at one of our services for this meaningful time when we remember we truly are dust and to dust we shall return. The day is humbling and reminds us that it is Christ's actions of love that give us our meaning and significance in the world.

Included in the newsletter is a schedule for our Wednesday LARC Lenten Worship Services. It my hope that these will enrich our understanding of Christ's teachings. Our community in Christ grows through these worship experiences with other parishes and are grateful for the relationship we have with our sisters and brothers in Christ.



**BISHOP'S LETTER** Also enclosed in this newsletter is a pastoral letter from Bishop Dunlop. There is great concern in our church for our neighbors whose lives are put at risk by the policy changes affecting immigration, care for people who identify as gender non-binary, and whether government funds pledged to care for our most vulnerable will be spent or frozen.

In our congregation's constitution it states that the purpose for our congregation includes:

*Serving in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity, justice, and equity for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, caring for the marginalized, embracing and welcoming racially and ethnically diverse populations, and standing in solidarity with the poor and oppressed and committing ourselves to their needs. (C4.02d)*

Please remember the marginalized in your prayers, your giving, and your witnessing and your works.

**FRAUD ALERT** Lastly, in February someone (unknown who) received access to our church directory and is using it for fraud. They were addressing correspondence to people by name and signing my name to the text. Please be leery of texts or emails asking for gift cards or money. If you are uncertain if the correspondence is valid, please contact the church office or me directly. If we collect money or gift cards at church, please always bring or mail the card or money TO the church, do not give out the numbers via email or text. I was proud of those who were uncertain and called to investigate. Smart move. Thanks to everyone who worked together to protect others in our congregation.

Together in Ministry,  
Pastor Jane Nicholson



# LOWER SUSQUEHANNA SYNOD

WHERE THE HUNGRY ARE FED AS WE HAVE BEEN FED BY CHRIST.

The Rev. James S. Dunlop  
Bishop

[jdunlop@lss-elca.org](mailto:jdunlop@lss-elca.org)

February 3, 2025

## A Pastoral Letter from Bishop James S. Dunlop

Dear Siblings in Christ,

In the past two weeks, we have witnessed political actions and rhetoric that have heightened anxiety in our church and society, especially among marginalized communities. As people of faith, we cannot ignore the harm caused by policies that marginalize the vulnerable and the false narratives that spread distrust. Our faith compels us to respond with the deep assurance of God's love and justice.

Jesus speaks directly to our anxious hearts in the Sermon on the Mount, "*Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear... But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well*" (Matthew 6:25, 33). In these words, Jesus reframes worry, inviting us to live differently – where our priorities reflect God's justice, mercy, and unconditional love.

Recent actions affecting the LGBTQIA+ community, threats to faith communities, and policies causing harm to the marginalized are not acceptable for us as followers of Jesus. We are particularly alarmed by threats to send police into our churches, an unacceptable violation of religious freedom and our identity as God's people. As Bishop Mariann Budde so faithfully preached on January 21, 2025, at the National Prayer Service held in the Washington National Cathedral, we are called to be people of grace and mercy, even in moments of deep division. Yet, we also recognize that such a message was met with denunciation. As a synod, we stand firm in proclaiming the Gospel: *All are welcome, all are valued, all are made in the image of God.*

False accusations have circulated about religious organizations receiving too much federal grant money without transparency regarding its use – including ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Our ministries are built on trust, transparency, and service. ELCA-affiliated programs, including Lutheran Disaster Response, ELCA World Hunger, and Global Refuge, have provided essential aid for decades, supporting families, feeding the hungry, housing the homeless, resettling refugees, and responding to natural disasters. ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton addresses these false claims and reaffirms our church's commitment to integrity and mission here: [ELCA Response](#). As leaders in the Lower Susquehanna Synod and the wider ELCA, we will not be drawn into cycles of fear. Instead, we will bear witness to the power of God's love, standing firm in our calling to serve, advocate, and proclaim Christ's justice.

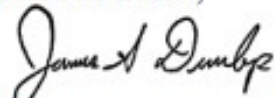
Within our current political and cultural climate, Christian Nationalism is growing – a movement falsely claiming that America was founded as a Christian nation and that laws and policies should reflect a specific religious agenda. As Lutherans, we believe God's love is for everyone, and we reject any belief that divides people, diminishes religious freedom, or justifies treating others unfairly.

The ELCA has long affirmed that civic engagement is a vital expression of our faith, as God is actively at work in the public sphere. The biblical vision of *shalom* calls us to seek justice and the common good, ensuring that human institutions serve all people equitably. As the prophet Micah reminds us, “*What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?*” (Micah 6:8). We stand firmly behind our preachers, teachers, and leaders who boldly proclaim the gospel in response to this biblical call, even in the face of opposition. Their faithful witness strengthens our shared mission to be a church that serves, loves, and advocates for the wellbeing of all people. We also encourage you to stay engaged in this holy work by taking these actions:

- **Seek resources and equip yourself.** Our synod has created and will continue updating a resource page with materials to strengthen our capacity for ministry and advocacy. Visit: [LSS Justice Resources](#).
- **Advocate for justice.** If you are concerned about recent policies affecting vulnerable communities, contact your state congressional leaders. [LAMPa](#) provides tools to assist with advocacy efforts: [Find your PA Legislators](#) and [Find your Congressional Delegation](#). Join LAMPa’s [email sign-up](#). Join the ELCA [e-Advocacy Network](#).
- **Support Lutheran ministries.** Lutheran Services in America works with 300 health and human services organizations and serves over 6 million people across 1,400 communities. If you believe in the work of our social services, consider making a gift directly to Lutheran Services in America: [Donate Here](#) or through your congregations.

*“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble”* (Psalm 46:1). We trust in the Lord. Our faith is where we stand. May we remain steadfast in Christ’s love, bearing witness to the Kingdom of God in a world longing for mercy and grace.

Yours in Christ,



✠ James S. Dunlop, bishop  
Lower Susquehanna Synod, ELCA

# WORSHIP

## LARC LENT 2025      THEME: Flourishing as Disciples

We will be having Wednesday Lenten services at the Lutheran, Anglican (Episcopalian), and Roman Catholic Churches (LARC Churches) March 12 through April 9 at 7:00 p.m. You are invited to stay for a time of conversation following worship.

Date and Time: 7:00	Weekly Theme	Location	Preacher
March 12	Beatitudes Matthew 5:1-12	Trinity Lutheran 431 Philadelphia Ave Chambersburg, PA 17201	Mother Patricia Dickson
March 19	Salt and Light Matthew 5:13-16	First Lutheran 43 W Washington St Chambersburg PA 17201 717-264-2015	The Rev. Barbara Barry
March 26	Lord's Prayer Matthew 6:5-13	Corpus Christi Roman Catholic 320 Philadelphia Ave Chambersburg, PA 17201 (717) 264-6317	The Rev. Jane Nicholson
April 2	Do Not Worry Matthew 6:25-34	Trinity Episcopal 58 S 2nd St Chambersburg, PA 17201	The Rev. Michael Allwein
April 9	Build Your House on The Rock Matthew 7:24-29	Solomon's Lutheran 4856 Wayne Rd Chambersburg, PA 17202 717-267-2266	Father Benjamin Kwaghgba

**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 19 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 Marcy House. Mercy House provides compassionate end-of-life care in a calm, peaceful setting. The physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of guests are addressed, and families and friends are comforted and supported.

Mercy House is an independent nonprofit and is the first home of its kind in Franklin County. Uniquely designed to manage end-of-life care, Mercy House employs specially trained and licensed caregivers who are attentive to individual needs. Partnering with area hospice agencies in creating comprehensive plans for holistic care, Mercy House is proud to be part of the movement to improve the end-of-life experience for individuals, families, and friends. Checks may be made payable to LARC.

**SUSQUEHANNA UNIVERSITY CHOIR** at St. John's Sanctuary located at 1811 Lincoln Way East, Chambersburg (Parking Lot A). Sunday, February 23rd. Starts at 3:00 p.m.

# WORSHIP

March 2	Transfiguration Sunday with Holy Communion and the burial of “The Alleluia”
Wed March 5	Ash Wednesday 9:30 Imposition of Ashes (Chapel) 5:30 Imposition of Ashes (Chapel) 7:00 Full worship with communion and imposition of ashes (Sanctuary)
March 9	Worship
Wed March 12	LARC Worship 7:00, soup 5:30 at Trinity Lutheran
March 16	Worship with Holy Communion
Wed March 19	LARC Worship 7:00, soup 5:30 at First Lutheran
March 23	The Buzz Jones Jazz Sextet leading Lent Worship
Wed March 26	LARC Worship 7:00, soup 5:30 at Corpus Christi
March 30	Worship
Wed April 2	LARC Worship 7:00, soup 5:30 at Trinity Episcopal
April 6	Worship
Wed April 9	LARC Worship 7:00, soup 5:30 at Solomon’s Lutheran
April 13	Palm Sunday 10:45 with Cantata and Holy Communion
Thurs April 17	Maundy Thursday 7:00 with Holy Communion and Stripping of the Altar
Fri April 18	Good Friday 7:00 Tenebrae Worship
April 20	9:00 Easter Breakfast 10:45 Easter Worship
April 27	Worship

**ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP** Ash Wednesday is March 5. 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, March 5**

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

# WORSHIP

## BUZZ JONES SEXTET



Join us on **Sunday, March 23 at 10:45 a.m.** for a unique Lenten Jazz Worship Service premiering Black Americans and their contributions to the arts through jazz and hymnody. Some of these may include: Blues March by Benny Golson; Precious Lord, Take My Hand; Jesus is a Rock in a Weary Land (spiritual); Come Sunday from Duke Ellington's (1943) Black, Brown & Beige Suite; The Preacher by Horace Silver; I Want Jesus to Walk With Me; Lord, Make Me More Holy; I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart by Duke Ellington. 2025 is the third time this group has visited with us and we are excited about their return. Please invite your friends and neighbors.

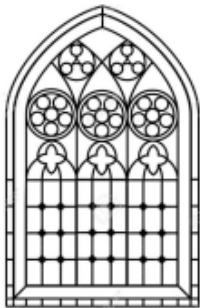
# STEWARDSHIP

## Stained Glass Window & AC Unit Update

(Information as of January 31, 2025)

### Windows

Total Cost: \$79,806  
Deposit Paid: \$19,961  
Balance due: \$59,845



Donations received:  
\$23,691  
  
Still need: \$56,115

### AC Unit

Total Cost: \$47,035  
Deposit Paid:  
\$24,370  
Balance due: \$22,665



Donations received: \$5,025  
  
Still need: \$42,010

**LENTEN OFFERING** This year's Lenten offering will be donated to **Wheels for Women**. This is a local non-profit that supports women facing a wide range of life challenges, including abuse, medical issues, substance recovery, family tragedies and abandonment by providing them with access to reliable used cars. Our donation will help them reach their goal for 2025 to deliver 24 vehicles to struggling women, thus enabling them to regain their independence and navigate the road to a better future. This offering may be placed in the Lenten offering envelope or identified on your check as "Wheels for Women."

# 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.

**DOWNSIZING?** 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. In December and January 4 refugee families from Syria needed much of what was available. If you have furniture to contribute, please contact Shelly Davies at St. Luke Lutheran Church or Don Greer at Trinity Lutheran Church.

**"SOCK IT TO ME"** Sundays have begun in preparation for the August 16, 2025 Back to School Event. NTT is collecting low cut socks for elementary boys and girls from **Kindergarten through 5th grade**. Our goal is to have **5 pair of socks** for each child who attends the event on that day. You may shop for donations and place those items in the collection sites in the back of the sanctuary, at the elevator entrance to the sanctuary, or in the **NTT** box in Memorial Hall. Cash and check donations are also accepted. You may use the envelopes that are available in Memorial Hall or use your own. Please make checks out to First Lutheran with socks in the memo line.

**ST. SERAPHIM** is a soup kitchen that offers meals to those in need. The meals are provided on Saturdays when the Salvation Army does not provide meals. NTT has joined with St Luke Lutheran to help provide servers for this ministry. St Seraphin is located near the Salvation Army. Upcoming volunteer opportunities are Saturday March 8th and Saturday April 19th If you are willing to help serve please call Mary Gotwald at 717 264-4759.

**LAUNDRY DAYS** continue at Spot Laundry beginning this year on Saturday, March 15, 2025. It is a two hour commitment beginning at 11:30am. Everyone is welcomed to come, greet our neighbors and pay their laundry expenses for that day with a laundry card. We also offer religious materials, water bottles, children's books and Meals on Wheels left overs. NTT has also started a children's library there. We provide used books with a note to take a book or two home. Please contact Joyce Ray at 717-658-6077 if you are interested in helping!



### 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!

# FAITH FORMATION



## 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](http://www.LutheranCamping.org/forms/SummerBrochure.pdf)

First Lutheran has campership money available to help with the cost.

Please talk with Pastor Nicholson for details.



**HOLY COMMUNION INSTRUCTION** will be held on Saturday, March 1 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. This class is for elementary age children and their parents. If your child is currently receiving communion and you would like them to have a better understanding of the sacrament, or if your child would like to receive Holy Communion in the near future, this class is for you. Please contact the church office by February 20th to register.



## WELCA



### The Women of the ELCA (WELCA)

will gather for Bible Study and fellowship on Thursday, March 13th at 1:30 p.m. in Meeting Room 1.

#### SAVE THE DATE!

Thursday, May 8th at 12 p.m.  
Spring Luncheon.

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



### Ladies' Breakfast

#### The Women's Fellowship Breakfast

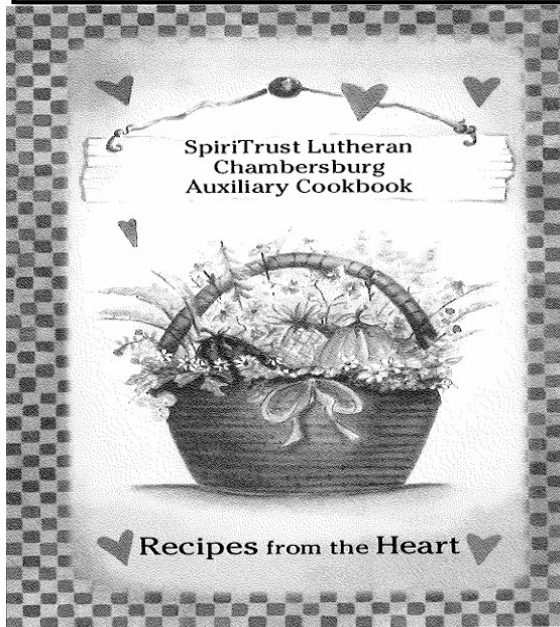
will be held at 8:30 a.m.  
on March 19th at Texas Lunch.  
All Ladies are Welcome!



# SCOUT SUNDAY



# SPIRITRUST



## FUNDRAISER SPIRITRUST LUTHERAN CHAMBERSBURG AUXILIARY

Favorite recipes have been donated from Lutheran Church Members. Cookbooks make wonderful gifts!  
\$15 Each

Please contact Mary Beth McGraw-Warne  
At (717) 372-8282



**Volunteer's  
Needed!**

Would you help a neighbor in need during 2025? Consider volunteering for SpiriTrust Lutheran Home Care & Hospice. Make friendly visits to hospice clients in Franklin County, or make supportive phone calls to grieving families, or sew memory bears. For more information please call Cathy Sweeney, Volunteer Coordinator at 570-599-5390.

# HELPING HANDS

## 2025 Council

President: Joyce Ray  
 Vice President: Mike Ross  
 Secretary: Gerry Wilson  
 Treasurer: Sally Herritt  
 Pastor: Jane Nicholson  
 Deacon: Freda Dorand  
 Martha Carbaugh  
 Jeff Dorand  
 Gary Kennedy  
 Marianne Kennedy  
 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
Tudy Gates	03/06
Rubens Paul	03/10
Geoffrey Craven	03/12
Tedd Sloan	03/16
Aiden Peters	03/17
Kris Heintzelman	03/18
Wayne Brensinger	03/18
William McCoy	03/18
Luke Cody	03/19
Karen Goodman	03/20
Ralph Burdick	03/20
Chandler Shearer	03/23
Beth Fairchild	03/25
John Shearer	03/27

## 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 April  
Newsletter  
will be  
March 15**



# THANK YOU

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your recent generous gift of \$30.00 to Lutheran World Relief's Quilt and Kit Shipping Fund! Thank you for ensuring these items get where they need to go. Your kindness brings comfort and hope to people, just when they need it most.

Thank you,

Ambassador Daniel V. Speckhard

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your support of Pregnancy Ministries Inc. Your total contributions received in 2024 is \$500.00. 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

As we look back on 2024, we praise God for his faithfulness and goodness. Your financial support enabled us to keep ministering by creating awareness, doing outreach and building community. You have made a contribution of \$2,000.00 in 2024. We are so grateful for donors like you.

Thank you,

She's Somebody's Daughter

First Evangelical Lutheran Church,

On behalf of the staff and board of directors at NETWORK Ministries, thank you for your generous financial support of \$2,000.00, 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. It's an honor to serve God in this way.



Sincerely,

Tammy Timmons

The text "Thank You!" is written in a large, green, cursive font. The word "Thank" is on the top line and "You!" is on the bottom line. There are three pink flowers with green leaves interspersed with the letters: one on the 'T', one on the 'h', and one on the 'o'.

**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



**40 DAYS OF LENT  
BEGINS ON ASH WEDNESDAY  
MARCH 5TH**