

FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF PORTAGE, PA

NEWSLETTER

January, February, & March 2026



906 Caldwell Avenue, Portage PA
Sunday Services @ 9:00AM
Phone: 814-736-3662
Website: Flcportage.com

Romans 1:11-12: "I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong—that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith."

Monthly Happenings

January: 1 Happy New Year! May God Bless & Keep You!

4 Sunday Worship 9 AM

5 Council Meeting 6:30 PM

11 Sunday Worship 9 AM

18 Sunday Worship 9 AM/Congregational Meeting

25 Sunday Worship 9 AM

February:	1	Sunday Worship 9 AM
	2	Council Meeting 6:30PM
	8	Sunday Worship 9 AM
	15	Sunday Worship 9 AM
	18	Ash Wednesday (see bulletin for time & place)
	22	Sunday Worship 9 AM
	27	Friday Fish Fry

March:

- 1 Sunday Worship 9 AM**
- 2 Council Meeting 6:30PM**
- 8 Sunday Worship 9 AM/Lent Season/Time Change Spring Ahead 1 hour**
- 13 Friday Fish Fry**
- 15 Sunday Worship 9 AM**
- 22 Sunday Worship 9 AM**
- 27 Friday Fish Fry**
- 29 Sunday Worship 9 AM/Palm Sunday**

Bible Verses:

1 Peter 5:7- "Cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you."

Proverbs 29:25- "Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe."

Matthew 11:28- "Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

Isaiah 66:13- "As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted."



Please keep the following in your prayers:

Emma Rosman

Carolyn Pinos

Dave Lamar

Hayley Krisko

Cheryl Sherbine

Keith Sherbine

Prayer: Father, Hear me. Have mercy. Help me. Have mercy. Heal me with Your peace. Father, I am in Your hands. Have mercy. Give peace. Amen.

Please keep in your prayers the sick, lonely, and forgotten.

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Lutheran Book of Prayer: New Year's Day- Lord God, heavenly Father, though You have created us for a life of eternity, we confess that by our sins we have transformed the space of time into a prelude for death. Forgive us the sins of the past, and breathe into us the Spirit of Your Son that we may serve you in this new year. Amen.

Ash Wednesday- Lord Jesus, we come before You sprinkled with ashes of sorrow, robed in sackcloth of repentance, and humbled by our fault, by our most grievous fault. Help us so to watch with You in Your Passion, that we remain awake to the infinite power of Your love. Amen.

Lent- Lord, bring us close to Your cross that we might know how You loved us and give Yourself for us. Lord Jesus, through it all help us hear in Your prayer the single purpose for which You endured pain and death: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Amen.

The Father's Love: Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called "children of God," Lord of Light, fill me with your peace in this day. Allow me to reflect it back out to the world as a beacon of my faith in you. Amen.

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We apologize if anyone was missed on the birthday and anniversary list. If a correction is needed or if you would like to see something else in the newsletter, please leave the information in Becky or Sharon's mailboxes, located at the back of the church.



Allegheny Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

701 Quail Ave., Altoona, PA 16602

814.942.1042

office@alleghenysynod.com

Office hours: Mon. - Fri. 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Our mission: Inviting people to love one another.

Our vision: All creation living in harmony with Christ.

If you need pastoral assistance from the Allegheny Synod, contact information provided.

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Lutheran Small Catechism 1979:

Confession: *What is private confession?* Private confession has two parts. First, we make a personal confession of sins to the pastor, and then we receive absolution, which means forgiveness as from God himself. This absolution we should not doubt, but firmly believe that thereby our sins are forgiven before God in heaven.

What sins should we confess? Before God we should confess that we are guilty of all sins, even those which are not known to us, as we do in the Lord's Prayer. But in private confession, as before the pastor, we should confess only those sins which trouble us in heart and mind.

What are such sins? We can examine our everyday life according to the Ten Commandments- for example, how we act toward father or mother, son or daughter, husband or wife, or toward the people with whom we work, and so on. We may ask ourselves whether we have been disobedient or unfaithful, bad-tempered or dishonest, or whether we have hurt anyone by word or deed.

How might we confess our sins privately? We may say that we wish to confess our sin and to receive absolution in God's name. We may begin by saying, "I, a poor sinner, confess before God that I am guilty of many sins." Then we should name the sins that trouble us. We may close the confession with the words, "I repent of all these sins and pray for mercy. I promise to do better with God's help."

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Lamentations 3:22-23- "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."

KITCHEN KORNER:

If you have a recipe that you would like to share, please place a copy in Becky or Sharon's mailboxes at church. Enjoy!

PARTY PUNCH

Bottle cranberry juice

Bottle pineapple juice

Bottle 7-up

Nettie Rush

Date and Nut Cake

1 c. dates (chopped)

1 tsp. Soda

Pour 1 c. boiling water or coffee over these; Cream together and add date mixture

1 c. sugar

$\frac{2}{3}$ c. shortening

2 eggs

Sift together:

2 c. flour

Pinch of salt

1 tsp baking powder

$\frac{2}{3}$ c. nuts

Add to above and bake at 375

Louise Seckinger

Brown Betty (rich raisin cake pudding)

1 c. brown sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$ c. milk

2 c. hot water

4 c. flour

$\frac{1}{2}$ c. shortening mixed with $\frac{1}{2}$ c. brown sugar

2 tsp baking powder

$\frac{1}{2}$ c. raisins

1 tsp. Each salt, cinnamon, and nutmeg

In a thin ungreased skillet or cake pan, put 1 c. brown sugar and the hot water; stir to dissolve sugar. Mix the shortening and $\frac{1}{2}$ c. brown sugar; add the raisins and milk. Add dry ingredients, stir well. Drop over brown sugar and water in skillet or pan and bake at 350 in the oven till top does not dent when touched.

Barbara Yetsko

Bible Verses: Psalm 107:1 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 Isaiah 41:10
Luke 18:27 Romans 8:31 John 15:13

Bible Trivia: Old or New- test(ament) your knowledge

Genesis	Exodus	Matthew	Mark	Leviticus	Numbers	Luke	John
Jonah	Micah	Titus	James	Ezekiel	Joel	Jude	Acts

What book of the bible can you find the Ten Commandments and can you place in the correct order?

- I am the Lord Your God You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain
- Remember the Sabbath day to keep it Holy Honor your father & your mother
- You shall not kill You shall not commit adultery You shall not steal
- You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor
- You shall not covet your neighbor's house
- You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his cattle, or anything that is your neighbor's

Luther and Lutheranism: Martin Luther was eight years old when Christopher Columbus set sail from Europe and landed in the Western Hemisphere. Luther was a young monk and priest when Michaelangelo was painting the Sistine Chapel in Rome. A few years later, he was a junior faculty member at a new university in small-town Germany, intently studying the Scriptures, “captivated with an extraordinary ardor for understanding Paul in the Epistle to the Romans.” In these days Luther was tormented by the demand for righteousness before God. “I did not love, yes, I hated the righteous God who punishes sinners, and secretly, if not blasphemously, certainly murmuring greatly, I was angry with God.” Then, in the midst of that struggle with God, the message of the Scriptures became clear, like a long-shut door opening wide. When he realized that a “merciful God justifies us by faith.”

January Birthday & Anniversary

1 Isabella Lamar

22 Karen Meintel

1 Peter Maul

22 Todd Hershberger

4 Jamie Schaffranek

22 Brandon Bobolsky

6 William Cooper

24 Stacy Gutshall

6 Alfred N. Maul

25 Wanda Hershberger

6 Frank (Rocky) Pohopin

25 Cory Maul

7 Robert Maul Jr.

25 Emma Rosman

8 Dann Crum

27 Linda McKrush

8 Aivah Maul

27 Lindsey Palesch

9 Jonathan Stauski

28 Amy Krisko

10 Donald Horner

31 Kelly McCarty

11 Cheryl Sherbine

31 Tony Girard

11 Emily Enderlein



11 Mimi Cole

12 Jason Cooper

12 Terry Steward Jr.

13 Pat McCarty

13 Bill Labar

19 Katie & Wesley Lloyd

20 Natasha Yohn

21 Myrna J Maul

21 Susan Schaffranek

21 Reece Werner

Happy Anniversary!

February Birthday & Anniversary

1 Samantha Gouse

11 Jason & June Cooper

2 Alexis Miller

28 Andrew & Danielle Ciokota

4 Linda Maul

5 Courtney Steward

6 Frances Popish

7 Nanci Steward

8 Kelly Werner

9 Kylee McCarty

9 Kelsey Maul

12 Marleigh Gray

13 Sharon Cordwell

14 Ericca Cadwallader

18 Clarence Shultz

20 Kiera McCarty

24 Kaelyn Troxel

26 Brittany Miller

27 Susan McQuillen

28 Noah Kerch



Congratulations

*on your
7th Wedding
Anniversary!*



March Birthday & Anniversary

1 Sierra Franey

27 Jacob Franey

1 Luke Maul

28 Amy Crum

2 Pat McCarty Sr.

30 Sherry Cadwallader

3 Tammy Selepack

30 Colton Robine

4 Ray R. Asfar

31 Brittany DeMatteis

6 Jason Yetsko

31 Tony DeMatteis

6 Mikel Gray

7 Joseph Lloyd



8 William Erndl

9 Russell Cole

12 Alison Connaghour

12 Evan Boland

15 James Pohopin

17 Wendy Kerch

18 Kieaira Miller

3 Mark & Stephanie Stancovich

20 Kimberly Hutsky

21 Amanda Hershberger

23 Holly Maul

27 Taylor Maul

Happy Anniversary!

FYI SECTION

Advent ends on Christmas Day and we will enter in to the next three seasons of the church in this edition of the newsletter for January, February, and March. The following is a little refresher on seasons of the church.

Christmas is a day and a season when we celebrate God's coming among us as a human child: JESUS, Emmanuel (which means "God with Us"). The liturgical color for Christmas is white, which reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world. Christmas lasts for 12 days from December 25 until January 5.

Epiphany is celebrated on January 6, when we remember the three wisemen visit to the Christ child. The color for epiphany day is white. During the time after Epiphany, we hear stories about Jesus' baptism and early ministry. The color for these Sundays is sometimes white and sometimes green. On the last Sunday we celebrate the Transfiguration. The color for this day is white, and we hear the story of Jesus shining brightly on the mountaintop.

Lent is a season when we turn to God and think about how our lives need to change. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday which will be February 18, 2026. It is also a time to remember our baptism, and how that gift gives us a new start every day. The color for Lent is Purple, symbolizing repentance. Lent begins Ash Wednesday and lasts for 40 days (not including Sundays) and ends on the Saturday before Easter Sunday.

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Let's talk about attending church!!! Maybe you do attend regularly, maybe it's hit and miss, or maybe you have good intentions but somehow just never make it on Sunday. Even if you are attending regularly maybe your heart and mind are not present, like there in body but not in mind. Whatever your category, it's a new year and lets all try to make a conscious effort to attend regularly and be present in mind and body. God is present always and there for us no matter what our excuses are for not giving up approximately one hour a week to listen to a message that just may give you what you need to face the week ahead. Please consider coming back to church if you have not been coming. We are a family of Christians and just like our family at home, we are all there for each other and seeing everyone gives you a little boost for the week ahead.



FYI SECTION Continued

Please come to church and join in the family. We need you and miss you and our church is growing little by little. The kids now have Sunday school and we have several kids coming regularly. Some of the church family has given of their time and talents to have Sunday school and some are working hard on activities for the kids like movie night and Weakland's corn maze, and even doing a Christmas play. These kids are the future of our church and we all need to support them and set examples so our church continues to grow and thrive.

Matthew 18:20 - "For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."

Hebrews 10:24-25 – "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Colossians 3:16 – "Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts."

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First Lutheran Church of Portage Newsletter

The Lord's Prayer: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be they name, they kingdom come, they will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

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In this next section of the newsletter, we try to talk with and see what is going on in our church family's lives and how they are doing and things you may or may not know about them and things they may want to share. Everyone is welcome to have anything put in the pews news that you may want to share with the rest of the church family, just put it in either Becky or Sharon's mailbox or email us and we will be happy to put it in.

Pews News

Our church family sends the Walter E. Maul family our deepest condolences and sympathy. Walter passed on December 10, 2025. Walter was a long time dedicated and active member of our church. He sang in the choir and was assistant organist for years and then became the organist until December 2023 when he very reluctantly retired from it. Walter also was church secretary for several years. He will be dearly missed by all who knew him. Please keep the family in your prayers for healing and comfort.

We would like to send a thank you and our appreciation to Theresa Arena who took over playing the organ for us in May of 2024. Theresa is a great asset to our church family and we so appreciate her time and talents. Theresa plays for several other churches in the area and manages to play for us in her busy schedule. Thank you!

In other pews news Sonny and Dan Kerch went to Germany to visit with Noah and Lena for Thanksgiving. Here are some highlights of their trip.



Thanksgiving was a little different for us this year. We got to celebrate with Noah and Lena in Germany. It was different not to hear everyone saying "Happy Thanksgiving" everywhere we went. We had to remember it is an American holiday. Haha!

We were able to experience some German culture by visiting Christmas markets in Bamberg, Nuremberg, Hof, and Munich. We squeezed as much as we could into our five-day visit. Noah has learned to speak German pretty well. Dan and I were quite impressed with him. We even had time to visit with Lena's dad and brother.

As hard as it is to have one of your kids so far away, we were very grateful and blessed to be able to make the trip. Wishing you all a wonderful Christmas and a blessed New Year.

Sonny

Pews News continued

We have been very busy at the church as we got a new epoxy floor in the basement kitchen. This project took a lot of work to get it accomplished. It's like you start what you think is one job and it turns into a bunch of jobs. The whole kitchen was taken apart and everything taken out of it. The big stove, all the cabinets, the refrigerator, and all tables were taken out and put in social room. The men fixed and painted the walls, cleaned, sorted dishes, pots, and pans, were washed and put back in some sort of organization. **A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HELPED IN ANY WAY** this could not have been done without you.

All that was done while some of our talented people in the church were working with the kids and practicing for the Christmas play. The social room got cleaned up just in time for church decorating and a time for fellowship on Sunday December 21. We thank all those who are stepping up and working with the youth. It is working and our church is growing and so good to see all the kids being involved in the church. Some pictures of the church decorating:

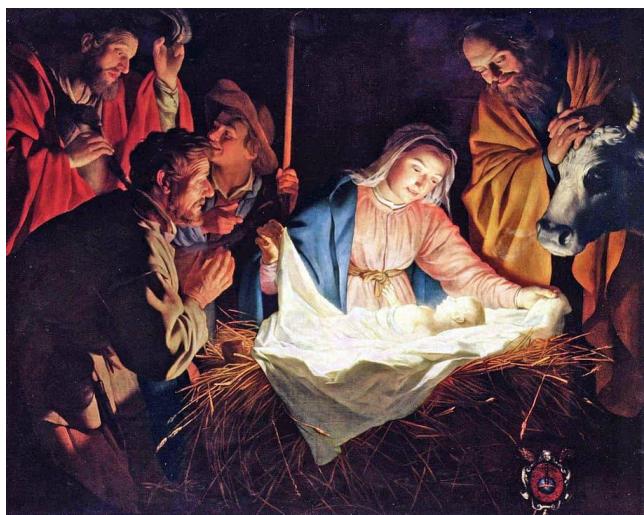


Pews News continued



After decorating the church, members had lunch and played games. Some pictures of the lunch and Bingo game "Jingle Jingle." **Thank you all who helped** and we had a wonderful time socializing.

Pews News continued



HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL!

Pews News continued

Hello All,

I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas with family and friends.

I wanted to reach out because I have been doing a lot of thinking about the direction the church is heading. I consider all members of the church as my extended family. I sometimes sit on a Sunday morning, prior to the start of church and I look around. I start thinking of this family or that one, about their kids and even their kids now. I think of how you are missed. I think of what I can do to help in some way.

I am writing to let you all know that I would like to start up Sunday School again. Starting the 2nd Sunday in January, I will be preparing a 30–45-minute lesson. If you attend with your child and would like him/her to attend Sunday School, it will start directly after the service. Parents you are more than welcome to stay if you like. I also have a few people who are willing to help.

Every issue of the First Lutheran Church Newsletter I put in this little thing in...

I am excited to start fellowship with the kids again. I hope to see you soon.

Sonny

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CH__ __ CH what is missing UR

Here is a message to think about.

The children of the church are the future and without them what will our future be??? Please come be a part of our church family and hear the word of God that gives you the boost that you may need to face the week ahead. We miss you we are not the same without you.

