

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



**Ixoye**  
**ICH-THUS**  
**Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior**

## **Pastoral Perspectives for January 2024**

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

Another new year is upon us! It's always a challenge each year to write out the correct dates for checks and other paperwork as 2023 changes to 2024 and is yet to be drilled into our memory for the year.

I'm not sure how many people actually make New Year's resolutions anymore but one that we all should be considering is that First Lutheran Church building is going to be 100 years in 2026; the construction began in 1924 and was completed in 1926.

So, if you would like to volunteer to be on the FLC 100th Anniversary committee please let me know so that I can direct you other like-minded people. As you have read, this grand old house of worship has seen better days and is need of much repair after 100 years. In the Holy Bible there are over 100 verses about giving or tithing to God: from the Book of Genesis to Gospel of St. Matthew.

God certainly has blessed us and His holy church over the last 225 years here in little Washington, PA and if we want to continue to gather and worship then the reality is that we need to give so that the church remains standing! Through the pandemic, and the world closing for almost two years, many churches around the world suffered greatly and continue to close. As I wrote this article the news reported that there will be more merging of Roman Catholic churches in Pittsburgh. This is taking place due to dwindling numbers of worshippers and, much closer to home, St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Canonsburg now closed!

Whether you are watching on-line or attending in person please understand that you are an important part of the Lutheran Church and if it's possible to contribute your time or talents to the glorification of God here at First Lutheran Church please answer the call of the Holy Spirit. As ELW hymn number #574 reminds us all, "**Here I Am, Lord.**"

In Christ Jesus,

Pr. Robert B. Grewe

Happy New Year and all the best in 2024!

The church council met on December 13<sup>th</sup> in 2023 and that night the council had decided to increase the pay from \$13,000 to \$18,000 for our music director Mr. Matthew Cimino.

When Matthew was hired the council offered Matthew the \$13,000 as an initial offer but told him that if he were to fulfill all the duties required of the church musician and the music director then his pay would be increased. Well, this young man certainly has stepped up to plate by directing the bell choir and also the adult choral choir. Matthew has also fulfilled the duties of playing at the midweek services, funeral services and has shown his talent in performing duets as well!

He is contributing to the newsletter and often works from home sending out music to the choral choir so they can be better prepared for their church rehearsals before the services.

I strongly believe, as does our pastor, that First Lutheran needs to retain this talented young man for years to come and we thought no better way than to pay him what he is worth.

The strong tradition at First Lutheran Church to have the best music possible for means the opportunity of having joyous music here for us all for many years to come.

Vice President

Dennis Schmidt

Happy New Year everyone!

First and foremost, a huge thank you to the bell and adult choirs for all their hard work that made our Advent and Christmas services a smashing success! Special thanks to our session musicians who brought wonderful duets to life as well! As we enter the new year, I'll be anxious to see how we grow as a congregation with our music and in all other aspects.

I always say there are no New Year's resolutions if you make each year better than the last. Let's make this next year no exception!

If you hear the call to music, maybe this is the perfect time to get started. It doesn't matter if you're a lifetime musician or you've never picked up an instrument before. I'm here to help our music grow!

And I'm beyond excited to see what 2024 brings our church!

Best,

Matt

### **Fundraiser Information**

As of the last Church Newsletter we did not have the final information regarding the Sarris Christmas Fundraiser. With the generous support of the Congregation, through orders and donations \$632.03 was raised.

A HUGE thank you to all,

Caitlyn and Vickie Group

### **Angel Tree**

Thank you to all for the lovely gifts to support the Salvation Army's Angel Tree Project. First Lutheran Church provided beautiful gifts for 20 families in the Washington Community. All the kindness and support our congregation shows is wonderful!

Many thanks,

Caitlyn and Vickie Group

## **EMBRACING HOPE ETHIOPIA**

### **From 2023 Annual Report**

Dear Church Community, individual donors, and friends,

I know you have a lot of choices and commitments when it comes to donating, and we are so grateful that you chose to donate to Embracing Hope Ethiopia's parents and children who live in desperate situations in the Kore's slum area as well as those in North Shewa who have been affected by continuing conflict and war.

Your generosity has made a huge difference in their lives. We have been supporting the poorest of the poor mothers and vulnerable children for more than 12 years in order to preserve families and improve livelihoods.

By providing free daycare, preschool and kindergarten along with school support for older children job training, education and small business grants for mothers, EHE is meeting basic needs and allowing families to grow holistically and bring change to their future life. At the same time our Spiritual Ministry is providing opportunities to learn about Jesus and study God's Word. Since 2021, we have been also supporting war victims' families and orphan children in North Shewa

### **THE IMPACT IS HUGE. JUST A FEW OF THE THINGS THAT YOUR GIFTS PROVIDED THIS YEAR!**

29,575 kg teff grain and 1,233 liters of oil split between 260 beneficiaries

Daycare for 35 children and preschool or kindergarten for 65 children

Supplemental support for 150 children attending school in grades 1-12

Health Screening and medical treatment for 250 children

Medical treatment for 250 parents

Formal/Vocational training for 17 parents

Seed money grants and petty trading training for 19 parents

Sunday School for 75 children

Afterschool programming for 82 children

And Much More

Alayu Tadesse, Director

**In 2026 First Lutheran Church building will be 100 years old!**

Our church is looking for volunteers to help plan the 100th anniversary of our current church at 92 West Walnut Street.

**We need YOU!**

Please let the council know if you would like to be on the planning committee

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**WNALC January Newsletter**

The WNAL Board meeting will be held Wednesday, January 6th at 10 AM in the lounge.

There will not be Circle meetings in January or February. Meetings will resume in March.

Have a blessed New Year,

Sonie

### **January Lay Readers**

7 Lisa Maust  
14 Kimberly Grewe  
21 Dennis Schmidt  
28

### **January Altar Flowers**

7 Don Hazlett  
14 Joan & John Sakerka  
21  
28

### **January Acolytes**

7 Heidi and Denico Walsh  
14 TBD  
21 TBD  
28 TBD

### **January Ushers**

7 J. Sarver; T. Stefanik  
14 K. Behrens; D. Looman; H. Snyder  
21 C. Krcil; R. Williams; R. McGoogan  
28 S. Ringer; D. Schmidt; Z. Mason; M. Verderber

### **January Counters—Alternate: Jennifer Black**

7 C. Group and V. Group  
14 L. Sten and R. Williams  
21 S. Rea and L. Coleman  
28 S. Berry and D. Schmidt

### **January Altar Team**

Joanne Marker and Lisa Hager

## **JANUARY BIRTHDAYS**

- 1 Betty Mancinelli
- 4 Joshua Clark
- 6 Elaine Burda
- 7 Andrew Serbak
- 13 David Looman
- 19 Amy Bassi
- 23 Alesia Scheffel
- 25 Lisa Maust
- 26 Joseph Sarver