

# FIRST CHURCH ALERT

615 Grant Street  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15219

2023  
**HOLY WEEK / EASTER**  
VOLUME 77, ISSUE 2

## HOLY WEEK & EASTER AT FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

### ***Holy Monday, Tuesday, & Wednesday***

Holy Week is just that: a Holy Week. Each day we move closer to the apex of Jesus' life and ministry. If you are downtown at mid-day or in the evening, avail yourself of the opportunity to worship and invite friends to join you.

Matins, or Morning Prayer is prayed on Holy Monday and Holy Wednesday at 9:30 AM and takes about 10 minutes.

Each Holy Tuesday, First Lutheran Church and Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, take turns hosting the Chrism Mass for the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod and the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh. This year, First Lutheran Church will host the liturgy at 10:00 AM. The Holy Eucharist is celebrated, and deacons and pastors/priests are invited to renew their vows of ordination. Our own Bishop Kurt Kusserow will preside and Bishop Ketlen Solak will preach. Together, they will bless the three Holy Oils for the Catechumenate, Healing, and Chrism, which are used in ministry through the coming year. As this liturgy focuses on those in the Holy Ministry, lay people are encouraged to attend in support of our clergy and to renew their own vows of Holy Baptism.

Holy Communion is celebrated on Holy Wednesday at Noonday, beginning at 12:10 PM, lasting about 20 minutes and including music. This day is also known as Spy Wednesday, commemorating the day that Judas secretly plotted to betray Jesus in exchange for 30 silver coins.

### ***Maundy Thursday: Celebration & Sadness***

Maundy Thursday is a day of mixed emotion. We rejoice in our Lord's gift of The Holy Eucharist. We recall, in a representative footwashing, his command to love and serve one another as he has loved and served us. And we remember with sorrow what happened after his Last Supper with followers and friends. We recall his betrayal and abandonment, his arrest, and the onset of his suffering.

*Continued on p. 4...*



*The Rev. Brian A. Evans*

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of our social media outlets!*



## TAKE NOTE!

*“The strife is o’er, the battle done;  
the victory of life is won;  
the song of triumph has begun...”*

The most holy week of the Christian Year and the most victorious day are upon us. From darkness to light, from sorrow to rejoicing, Holy Week, the Three Days, and Easter will be observed once again.



Sr. Cynthia A. Pock, n/OLF, AAGO

### **“All glory, laud, and honor to you, Redeemer King”**

The Parish Choir begins the somber observance of Holy Week with simple chant and a plaintive setting of Lamentations 1:12: *Is it Nothing to You?*

### **“Jesus, I will ponder now on your holy Passion”**

The Parish Choir will sing for liturgies on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. The Great Vigil of Easter will include solo portions and congregational song as we move from darkness to the brilliant light of Resurrection.

### **“Welcome, happy morning, age to age shall say!”**

Brass and timpani, and organ shall accompany joyful singing on this, the Queen of Feasts – the Resurrection of our Lord.

Spring brings new beginnings; Jesus brings new life. Let us walk with him through his Passion and rejoice together at his ultimate victory!

Soli Deo Gloria!

Sr. Cynthia A. Pock, n/OLF, AAGO  
Cantor



## SAVE THE DATE CONGREGATION MEETING

**Sunday, May 21—10:00 AM**

The ANNUAL ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING will be held Sunday, May 21, at 10:00 AM in Holy Cross Hall. This is our annual program meeting. The Congregation will receive reports from all Standing and Special Committees of the parish as well as from the staff. Members will be elected to our Congregation Council.

***All voting members of the congregation are encouraged to be present.***

***Annual reports from committee chairs are due by Monday, May 8.***



## MARATHON SUNDAY '23

This year's Pittsburgh Marathon will impact our worship schedule for **Sunday, May 7.**

*The 8:30 AM liturgy has been cancelled.*

**Please plan to join us for worship at the 11:00 AM liturgy.**

## CHRISTIAN ED. CORNER

### PALM SUNDAY SERVICE PROJECT

This year, our Palm Sunday All Ages Activity will include making Easter gifts to be sent to our homebound members or others who are recuperating from illness. There will also be materials available to make one for your family as well. Join us on **April 2 during the Sunday Church School hour (9:45 - 10:45 AM)** as we honor Holy Week by expressing care for others. All are welcome for food, fellowship, and activities.

### FIRST CHURCH TWEENS

(3rd-6th grades) will gather for an Easter Egg Scavenger Hunt on **Saturday, April 15 from 2:00 - 4:00 PM** at the church. Students will search the church for hidden eggs containing clues that will deepen their knowledge of the Bible and our church building. We will conclude with cupcake decorating (and eating!). Parents can plan to drop off their kids as long as we have an updated health form on file; if you need to fill out a health form, please email Christine Hoffman via email at: [cgh@flcpittsburgh.org](mailto:cgh@flcpittsburgh.org).

### CAMP DOWNTOWN: HELPING HANDS

The Holy Spirit works through countless "Helping Hands" in our lives — and even works through each of us and our hands, as well. This is the theme for the Downtown Ministerium's summer VBS program for rising Kindergartners - 6th graders (with 7th-12th graders serving as youth counselors). It will be held **June 19 - 23 from 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM**. The cost is \$50 for the first child, \$40 for the second child, and so on. We will start and end the day at FLC with lessons and activities surrounding our week-long theme with an afternoon excursion in the downtown or surrounding areas. Online registration has already opened at: <https://flcpittsburgh.org/education/camp-downtown/>



## EASTER ADULT EDUCATION

### Resurrection Bible Study: April 16 & 23

Pastor McCurry will help explore two of St. John's stories about the resurrected Jesus -- and ones that we will not hear preached in this Easter season.

### Christian Ethics of the Resurrection: April 30

How do we understand the end of life? Join Father Dan Hall to learn about how Christ's resurrection shapes our understanding of aging and death.

### May 7 - Marathon Sunday

**No Sunday Church School**

### Health Care, Serious Illness, & the End of Life: May 14

How do we approach healthcare in the case of serious illness and at the end of life? Led by Shannon Galgan, we will discuss advanced care planning including standards of care, legal documents, and medical orders as a means of sharing your goals, values, and beliefs regarding your medical wishes in the event of serious illness. Shannon is a certified Registered Nurse Practitioner who specializes in palliative medicine.

### May 21 - First Church's Annual Meeting

**No Sunday Church School**

## SAVE THE DATE: BEZALEL DAY

Please join us for Bezalel Day at the church on **Sunday, April 30 from 4:00-6:00 PM**. Bezalel was the chief artisan of the Tabernacle and oversaw the construction of the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 31:1-10). Bezalel Day is a fun day of arts workshops for adults and children led by artists from the larger Christian community. Vicar Elizabeth is planning Bezalel Day as her internship project. The aim of Bezalel Day is to help participants identify their artistic interests and gifts and to explore ways that they can use those interests and abilities both in their spiritual practices and in worship. No experience in the arts is necessary. Bring your friends! Bring your whole family! More information will follow. Please mark your calendar!





## NOTES OF THANKS

*These messages of thanks have been received by the parish office from members and friends who wish to express their gratitude to the whole parish family of First Church.*

To our Parish Family,

George and I would like to express our thanks to First Church's Care and Hospitality Teams, as well as to other members who have provided us with meals, kept in touch with cards and notes of get well wishes, thoughtful expressions of concern, and prayers for my recovery, following my accident on January 20 that resulted in a right hip fracture.

I am looking forward to being able to resume normal activity in the not too-distant future. Even though we have not been able to attend in-person worship, due to George's mobility issues, since the Covid Pandemic began, we continue to be grateful for the livestream option First Church provides.

Yours in Christ,

*Beatrice Weimer*

Beatrice Weimer

To the Parish Family of First Church:

Thank you to each of you that supported our family during my recent recovery from surgery. Your kindness, cards, words of encouragement, and delicious dinners were so appreciated.

Love,

*Pr. Erin*

Pastor Erin Evans

*Continued from cover...*

Our Maundy Thursday liturgies on April 6 hold our emotions in tension. They begin with solemn joy in our celebration of the Eucharist. But as we worship, we become more and more conscious of the forces of darkness that will sweep our Lord away to his death.

Maundy Thursday liturgies will be celebrated at 12:00 and 7:00 PM. Both will include footwashing, and anyone willing to have their feet washed by a pastor is invited to come forward and do so. The service at noon is a full liturgy of The Holy Eucharist, lasting approximately 45 to 50 minutes. Our 7:00 PM liturgy is the Liturgy of the Lord's Supper. At its conclusion, the altar and chancel are stripped bare, allowing us to consider the agony of our Lord's betrayal and to ponder what lies ahead. The faithful are invited to remain in the church in silent prayer before the tabernacle and the Lord's presence in the reserved Sacrament, remembering our Lord's words to Peter on the night of his arrest, "Could you not stay awake with me one hour?" The Parish Choir will sing. One of their selections will be *O Sacred Banquet* (*O Sacrum Convivium*) a Pomeranian Canticle, edited by Pastor Pfatteicher and sung to a musical setting by John W. Becker.

The Liturgy of the Lord's Supper on Maundy Thursday is the first segment of the Paschal Triduum, one great service that is celebrated over the course of three days. The Triduum also includes the liturgies of Good Friday evening and the Vigil of Easter. There is no benediction at the end of Maundy Thursday's worship. It is "to be continued" on Good Friday.

### **Good Friday Worship in German**

First Church maintains a ministry to the German community of Pittsburgh and Good Friday worship in German is part of that ministry. We will again offer a German liturgy of Holy Communion on Good Friday (*Karfreitagsgottesdienst*), April 7. The service will begin at 10:00 AM. The Rev. Alina Kanaski, pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Bower Hill, will preach and preside. All are welcome.

### **Good Friday Worship at Noonday:**

#### **SERVICE OF PRAYER AND PREACHING**

The commemoration of our Lord's death includes a Service of Prayer and Preaching on Good Friday,



April 7, at 12:00 PM. This simple, unadorned liturgy includes hymns, readings, the Great Litany, and a sermon.

Following the service, the church will remain open for private prayer and for meditation on the sacrifice of Christ. Scripture tells us that Jesus languished on the Cross from noon until 3:00 PM. We invite the faithful to spend this time in prayer. At 2:30 PM, the time for private prayer and contemplation ends with praying Stations of the Cross.

### **Good Friday Evening**

#### **LITURGY OF THE PASSION & DEATH OF OUR LORD:**

Our liturgy on Good Friday evening forms the second part of the Paschal Triduum. We will gather at 7:00 PM on April 7 for The Liturgy of the Passion and Death of Our Lord. This service asks us to face death as the consequence of sin. The enormity of Jesus' sacrifice humbles us and asks us to remain with him to the end.

This Good Friday liturgy includes some of the most ancient traditions of the Church. The entire Passion according to Saint John is read in a darkened church. We pray the Solemn Bidding Prayer, specifically appointed for Good Friday. We hear the Reproaches directed to those executing our Lord. We are invited to venerate his holy cross. While we do not celebrate communion on Good Friday, we do receive it in the bread and wine consecrated at the Liturgy on Maundy Thursday. The Tabernacle is emptied and left open, revealing an empty chamber. For a brief time, we experience life without the presence of Christ.

Our Parish Choir will offer choral selections and support for congregational singing. The chancel will be bare. With an emphasis on darkness and silence, the liturgy touches us with sorrow. We ponder the Lamb of God offered for the sins of the world. As on Maundy Thursday, there is no final blessing. We leave in silence and in gratitude for our Lord's offering of himself. Our three-day liturgy continues and comes to completion in the Vigil of Easter on Holy Saturday.

*Continued on p. 6...*

## **WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!**



*New members Frances & Eric Verschuure (ABOVE) and Sarah Maenner (BELOW) were received into our family of faith on March 19.*



### **LUTHERLYN REGISTRATION HAS BEGUN**

and camperships are available through First Lutheran Church. We will be providing \$200. towards one week of camp at Lutherlyn. When you register with Lutherlyn, please pay your registration minus the 200. and then email the confirmation letter with the outstanding amount to financial secretary Suanne O'Dell ([sso@flcpittsburgh.org](mailto:sso@flcpittsburgh.org)) Further financial support is available if needed by contacting Pastor Evans. Lutherlyn camp program info can be found here:

<https://www.lutherlyn.com/summercamp/>



**Holy Saturday:****THE GREAT VIGIL OF EASTER**

The climax of the Paschal Triduum and focal point of the entire Church Year is The Great Vigil of Easter. On this holiest of nights, we pass from death to life with our Lord. The Easter Vigil begins at 7:00 PM on Holy Saturday, April 8. It is the Christian Passover. From earliest days, this has been the most important liturgy of the Church.

Weather permitting, we will gather in the courtyard. A new fire will be struck for a Service of Light. The Paschal (Easter) Candle will be lighted and will lead the people of God into a darkened church where the Light of Christ scatters the night of sin and death. Through the words of the ancient paschal hymn of praise (The Exsultet), we join all creation in offering thanks to God for the mystery of our redemption.

A Service of Readings features passages from the Old Testament used to instruct candidates for Baptism in the early Church. The lessons provide an overview of God's creative and redeeming activity and help us understand our own passage from death to life in the waters of Baptism.

Then, we ask God's blessing on the water of Baptism and make a Renewal of Baptismal Vows. We recall the grace of our new birth in Christ and affirm the covenant God made with us. We pray a litany asking God for the grace to fulfill the promises made in Baptism.

Finally, the chancel is prepared for Easter, the candles and church are lighted, the organ bursts forth, bells ring, and we sing the Gloria in Excelsis for the first time since Lent began. We break into shouts of joy, singing "Alleluia" as we meet the Risen Lord who comes to us in the first Eucharist of Easter. The Paschal Triduum ends with God's people prepared to return on Easter morning for the celebration of the "Queen of Feasts."

Oftentimes, exuberant worshippers continue celebrating the breaking of the Lenten fast and may be found at the Tap Room in the William Penn Hotel, immediately following the Great Vigil. All are welcome.

**Easter Sunday:****THE QUEEN OF FEASTS!**

No joy is more compelling or complete than the joy of Christians on Easter Day. Our Lord's victory over death calls forth shouts of "Alleluia" that deafen an unbelieving world. First Church will be adorned with colorful blossoms of new life. Our worship will be vibrant, spirited, and filled with rejoicing.

The Resurrection of Our Lord will be celebrated in festive liturgies of The Holy Eucharist at 8:30 and 11:00 AM on Sunday, April 9. Both will include music by our Parish Choir along with brass and timpani. Between the liturgies, a continental breakfast will be available in Holy Cross Hall. We invite everyone for breakfast and fellowship on Easter Day, The Queen of Feasts.

With you in Christ,



The Rev. Brian A. Evans  
Senior Pastor

**MAUNDY THURSDAY FOOTWASHING:**

Jesus said to his disciples, "So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them." JOHN 13:14-17

At the bidding of our Lord Jesus, and in servanthood to him and to one another, your pastors invite anyone who would do so to come forward and allow them to wash their feet at the 12:00 or 7:00 PM Maundy Thursday liturgies. No sign-up is required. Instructions will be in the bulletin.





# FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

## Statement of General Fund Activities For the year ended December 31, 2022

As shown in the chart at right, for the full year of 2022 you continued to faithfully and generously support FLC's ministries. Total revenues of \$796,520 compared to total expenses of \$810,380, resulting in a modest deficit of (\$14,160). Offerings & other Gifts of \$607,119, which consists mostly of envelope giving, were \$17,231 below the \$624,350 budgeted figure for the year.

As another point of comparison, Offerings and other Gifts were higher in 2022 than the 2021 figure of \$592,162, largely reflecting an \$11,408 increase in envelope giving during 2022 compared to the prior year.

Total expenses of \$810,680 were slightly over budget, by \$2,759. Most of this was the result of \$43,000 in unplanned expenses to replace two HVAC units on our roof that had exceeded their useful life. Property Committee is developing a plan for annual replacement of mechanical systems and other needed maintenance, which will be useful in the preparation of budgets in future years.

In the above chart, you will notice that personnel expenses were \$17,461 below budget. This reflects lower than budgeted housing expenses due to our local intern (Vicar) during the 2nd half of the year, and reduced overtime in our housekeeping position. Other savings were realized in Christian Ed and Youth Ministry due to the cancellation of the planned ELCA Youth Convention for the summer of 2022. Lower Parish Administration costs, consisting of supplies, postage and office equipment also contributed significant expense savings during the year.

Distributions and Interest includes transfers from funds which are restricted by purpose as designated by the donor. The largest distribution was received from our own Passavant Fund, which we rely on to support our ministries at First Church. General Fund surpluses and deficits result in transfers into/additional transfers out of the Passavant Fund. Maintaining and growing the Passavant Fund is necessary for the continued support of all of FLC's ministries.

We remain grateful for your abundant and unfailing support of First Church and its ministries and ask that you continue giving as you are able. Please direct any questions, comments, or concerns you may have to the Chair of Finance, Jim Nealon.

Accounts	Actual	Budget	Variance
<b>Revenues</b>			
Offerings & other gifts	\$ 607,119	\$ 624,350	\$ (17,231)
Distributions & interest	189,401	183,650	5,751
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>796,520</b>	<b>808,000</b>	<b>(11,480)</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Personnel	\$ 539,410	\$ 556,871	\$ (17,461)
Benevolence	62,335	63,450	(1,115)
Christian Ed. & Youth Ministry	9,578	22,975	(13,397)
Evangelism and Social Ministry	17,258	13,075	4,183
Parish Operations	40,415	49,325	(8,910)
Property Maintenance	125,466	83,425	42,041
Worship	16,217	18,800	(2,583)
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>810,680</b>	<b>807,921</b>	<b>2,759</b>
<b>Net Total</b>	<b>\$ (14,160)</b>	<b>\$ 79</b>	<b>\$ (14,239)</b>





# HOLY WEEK



APRIL 2 - 9, 2023

## **PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION**

Holy Communion with Procession of Palms from the US Steel Plaza	8:30 & 11:00 AM
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## **HOLY TUESDAY**

Chrism Mass at First Church	10:00 AM
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## **HOLY WEDNESDAY**

Noonday Holy Communion	12:10 PM
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## **MAUNDY THURSDAY**

Holy Communion with Footwashing	12:00 PM
Holy Communion with Footwashing & the Stripping of the Altar	7:00 PM

## **GOOD FRIDAY**

German Good Friday Service	10:00 AM
Service of Prayer and Preaching	12:00 PM
Stations of the Cross	2:30 PM
Liturgy of Our Lord's Passion & Death	7:00 PM

## **HOLY SATURDAY**

The Great Vigil of Easter	7:00 PM
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## **THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD: EASTER SUNDAY**

Festival Holy Communion	8:30 & 11:00 AM
Easter Breakfast	9:45 AM

*Holy Week liturgies will be livestreamed, with the  
exception of Stations of the Cross on Good Friday.*