

First Evangelical Lutheran Church

214 N Pennsylvania Avenue
(724) 478-1283

P.O. Box 275

Apollo, PA 15613
office@flcapollo.org

A congregation of the Southwest Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

PASTORAL PARAGRAPHS

March 2026

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

From Matthew 17: 1-8:

¹ Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. ² And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became bright as light. ³ Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. ⁴ Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will set up three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁵ While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" ⁶ When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. ⁷ But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid." ⁸ And when they raised their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.

If you'll recall my sermon for Transfiguration, I noted how bewildered, excited, scared, and confused that Peter, James, and John must have been when they saw Jesus transfigured. The Transfiguration of Jesus was a defining moment for Jesus, but the disciples really didn't know how to take it. I also noted how I've been feeling a bit like Peter, James, and John, bewildered, scared, excited, and confused. I don't feel this way because I saw my friend change in front of my eyes, but because Easter is coming up, I'm doing the planning for Holy Week for one of the first times as a pastor, and our world has felt so topsy-turvy. And what happened with the disciples is Jesus came and touched them and told them to get up and to not be afraid. When we are feeling a little lost in life, we can trust in Jesus, find our identity in relation to Jesus and God, and to not be afraid, to be grounded by Jesus. That doesn't mean we don't need to work at moving forward, it just means that we can lean on our faith in Jesus to help us navigate where our lives can be at this point. Somehow, things will get better even if we don't feel it right now. However, we can pray to God to help us find our way, and God's love can strengthen us. May God show us the way to live.

Blessings, Pr. Caroline

The Reverend Dr. Caroline E. Clifford, Pastor

Southwestern
Pennsylvania Synod
Bishop Melissa Stoller
412-367-8222

Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America
800-638-3522

COUNCIL
Mary Bremer
Lisa Carnahan
Pr. Caroline Clifford
Carmen Cypher
Cal Deemer
Dorothy Doty
William Kerr
William Moore
Cindy Shaner
Leslie Seltzer

STAFF
Pr. Caroline Clifford
Ken Carnahan
Lisa Carnahan
Ben Coulter
Dorothy Doty
Gregg LeMay
Georgia Richardson
Leslie Seltzer



February Council Highlights

The council meeting was held on February 11, 2026 at 10:00 AM. The following is a summary of the meeting:

1. Action items:
 - a. Steve, the man from the chairlift company, checked the measurement and the electric box. He said it will probably be mid to late March to do installation. Installation usually takes 1-2 days.
 - b. Dot will plan a meeting for Policy and Procedure updates once she has dates from Dave Coulter and Mary Beamer.
 - c. The check was sent to help an anonymous member.
 - d. Dot would like Bill Kerr to send a letter to Governor Josh Shapiro inviting him to attend the 100th Anniversary celebration.
 - e. Notification of Grants will happen in late February/early March.
 - f. Dave will look at what needs done to fix Pastor's desk.
2. Letter received: Lisa received a donation letter for Special Olympics. Last year a \$50.00 donation was sent. The council decided to send \$50 for 2026.
3. Treasurer's report:
 - a. A \$5,000.00 donation was received towards the Air Conditioning.
4. Pastor Report:
 - a. Worship times for Lent and Holy Week will be as follows:
 - i. Maundy Thursday: Soup supper at 5 PM/Worship at 6 PM.
 - ii. Good Friday: Originally it was stated at council to have the worship at 7 PM, but it has since been changed to 6 PM.
 - iii. Mid-Week Lenten services will be at 6 PM as voted by council
5. Old Business:
 - a. Lisa Carnahan, Dot Doty and Bill Kerr plan to attend the Council Training being offered by the Synod Office at the North Versailles Lutheran Church on Saturday, February 21, 2026.
 - b. The Annual Congregational Meeting is March 1, 2026.
 - i. Lisa put out a sign-up sheet for those attending to know the number of potatoes to cook for the potato bar.
 - ii. Dot is working on the annual report.
 - iii. Pastor Caroline invited Pastor Erin Jones, Synod's Director of Evangelical Mission & Assistant to the Bishop, to be the guest preacher for the worship service. She plans to discuss the survey at the Annual Congregational meeting.
6. New Business:
 - a. Details of the congregational survey were discussed. The council will be preparing a letter with instructions to tell people how to do the survey. It was decided to send out paper copies since the congregation may need help with inputting online on a computer.



February Council Highlights - Continued

7. Standing committee reports:
 - a. Building and Grounds:
 - i. Dot Doty thanked Dave Coulter for a great job in leading the Building & Grounds Committee.
 - ii. Cal Deemer recognized Ken Carnahan for keeping everything clean with all the snow we have had.
 - b. Worship & Music: No report. The committee will be setting a meeting before Holy Week.
 - c. Outreach/Service Committee: Valentines were mailed and/or delivered to the Homebound and Shut-Ins of the congregation. The committee is working on something for Easter.
 - d. Endowment Committee: - Next meeting TBD.
 - e. WELCA: No report. Next meeting in March.
 - f. Finance Committee: Next meeting TBD.
 - g. Safety Committee: Safety checklist attached. Cindy gave an update for what will be included in the annual report.
 - h. Good of the Congregation:
 - i. General consensus is that the council meeting time for 2026 will remain at 10:30 a.m. Dot Doty will chair next month's meeting due to Bill Kerr having a doctor's appointment.
 - ii. The collections for Ash Wednesday, Mid-week Lenten Services and Maundy Thursday will go towards the air conditioning. Motion made by Cal Deemer to put Lenten collections towards the air conditioning and seconded by Carmen Cypher. Motion carried.

Next Council meeting will be held on March 11, 2026, at 10:30 AM.



Spring Forward
DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME
SUNDAY, MARCH 08, 2026



Join us at First Church for our Mid-week Lenten Services on Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome!

MEN'S Breakfast!

Men's Breakfast Buddies will meet Saturday, March 14th at Valley Dairy/Leechburg @ 8:30 a.m.



Ladies Lunch Bunch will meet Saturday, March 14th, at the church @ 11:00 a.m. to go to Villa Ballanca.

Mark your calendars!

Gregg LeMay will be hosting a Calm Event on Friday, March 20th at 6:30 p.m. at St. Paul's Highfield Lutheran Church.

This event is dedicated to helping you relax in a serene environment with aromatherapy, silent prayer and peaceful music played by Gregg LeMay.



LENTEN OFFERINGS

Donate the daily price of a hot cup of coffee to help keep you cool this summer. All Lenten Offerings will go towards the new air-conditioning.



The mission of a church safety team is to create a secure environment that allows the congregation to worship freely while ensuring the safety and well-being of all members and visitors.

- First Lutheran Church Safety Team – Chairman – John Shaner, Co-Chair – Cindy Shaner, Pastor Caroline, Dot Doty, Lisa Carnahan, Ken Carahan, Mary Beamer, Linda Smith, Leslie Smeltzer, William Kerr, Cal Deemer, Mel Silvis, and Dave Coulter.
- There is a direct cross link through the members of the Safety Team, with Church's Council and Building and Grounds.

MARCH MEMORY VERSE



Romans 12:12

Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; persevere in prayer.



Registration for Summer Camp 2026 is OPEN.
Camperships are available for all who need assistance. Call 724-865-2161 or email registrar@lutherlyn.com for a campership application.



By: Kimberly Knowle-Zeller
February 4, 2026

Faith in Action

Celebrating our neighbors

Growing together – February 2026

Focal verse

"Little children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth" ([1 John 3:18](#)).

Reflection

There's an unwritten rule in rural America—at least in the part of Missouri where I live—that you must greet those you pass while driving. With a nod of the head and a lift of the hand in passing, you acknowledge that you see each other. It's a way to give witness to the road before us and the varied roads it takes to get from here to there. It's community and welcome and seeing everyone we meet as a friend.

Whenever we drive, whether to take the kids to school or for a trip to the grocery store, we acknowledge other drivers and they acknowledge us. Each person we pass lifts their hand, and I return in kind. Sometimes we know the family in the car and other times my husband and I will look at each other and ask, "Do you know them?" and we both say no, but we still wave.

With each wave, the kids ask, "Did you know them?"

Sometimes yes and sometimes no, but I tell them that it's just what you do—you wave and recognize the person before you.

I can't help but keep this image before me as the world spirals. Things right now feel scarier every day. The threat of violence and war is closer than we'd like to believe. Differences in opinion can break apart friendships—and sometimes lead to loss of life.

I know there's so much I can't control and so much that's beyond my understanding. When the political divide keeps families from talking to one another and people make rash judgments, I want to show my kids another way. I want to be a model for seeing the people before me as God's beloved.

This waving of my hand, this time to see the neighbors in front of me—this I can do. And I can invite my children to watch me notice and celebrate our neighbors, hoping that with every wave and nod of the head we're moving closer to bringing each of us to a world where neighbors work for the common good. Where we can see each other not by who we voted for but who we want to become as a community: kind and full of love.

Practices

- Be intentional about waving at and greeting your neighbors. If you're outside—at the park or walking your dog—and don't know someone's name, stop, say hello and ask.
- Research organizations in your community or in another state that are working to welcome immigrants and refugees. Make a donation and pray for your neighbors both near and far.

Prayer practice

Memorize a verse of Scripture to help focus your attention on loving your neighbors. Take this month's focal verse and say it together to begin your day or before meals: *Little children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth.* As you let the words seep into your mind and body, see what actions arise for you to do as a family.

About the author

Kimberly Knowle-Zeller



Kimberly Knowle-Zeller is an ordained ELCA pastor, mother of two, spouse of an ELCA pastor and co-author of *The Beauty of Motherhood: Grace-Filled evotions for the Early Years*. She lives with her family in Cole Camp, Mo. Her website is kimberlyknowlezeller.com.

Don't Miss Out—Be Part of Our New Church Directory!
Our new church pictorial directory is coming together beautifully,
but we don't want to miss you!
If you haven't yet signed up for a photo session, please do so soon.

Photo Sessions:

We'll be offering photo sessions for individuals and families on the following dates and times:

  **9:00-10:45 AM & 12:00-12:45 PM**

Sunday, 1 March

Sunday, 8 March

Sunday, 22 March

 **Church (exact location to be announced when you schedule your time)**

 **You may submit your own photo (.jpg format only), if you prefer.**

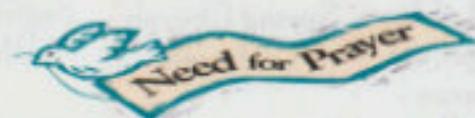
How to Participate:

- Sign up for your photo session on the clipboard in the church Narthex or call church secretary Leslie Smeltzer to schedule a time (724.478.1283).
- Bring your best smiles! Each household will receive a complimentary photo for the directory.
- Please note, these are not professional photos; we are using our cellphone to take the photos.
- Please also take a few minutes to **review and update your contact information** (i.e., name[s], address, phone number, email, etc.) to help us keep our records current.

Let's make sure every smiling face is included in this special keepsake of our church family!

If you have any questions, please contact **Leslie Smeltzer [724.478.1283 or office@flcapollo.org]** or **Tammy Manko [412.289.2705 or tammymanko@yahoo.com]**.

Thank you,
Leslie and Tammy



At the end of March, all present names on the current prayer list will be removed. If you wish to have someone put on the new list or have their name moved to the Continuing Prayer List, please call the office to let Leslie know. Thank you!



DRESSES and BRITCHES

This group met at St. Paul's-Highfield Lutheran Church on February 12. It was an interesting few hours. There was conversation, sewing, brainstorming and laughter. The "collection" of creations has been moved from the narthex to one of the education rooms in the fellowship hall. Please take a minute to see what this group has made.

We will meet next on March 19 at 2 p.m. in the fellowship hall. If you don't know how to sew, we can find something for you to do. Or we can teach you. Any questions, call Glenda at 724-567-6494. Always like to see new faces!

Lenten Worship & Luncheons

brought to you by the United Apollo Ministerial Association (UAMA)



February 25
12:00pm

Boiling Springs Presbyterian
1668 PA-56, Spring Church
w/Rev. TJ Lucas of Quality Life Svcs. Apollo



March 4
12:00pm
Spring Church

Lutheran 3623 Lutheran Church Rd
w/Rev. Dr. Caroline Clifford of First Evangelical Lutheran - Apollo



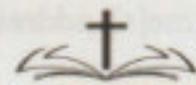
March 11
12:00pm

New Life Baptist 319 N. 2nd St., Apollo, w/Pastor Brad Ferko, EdD, of Spring Church Lutheran



March 18
12:00pm

Apollo Free Methodist 1027 PA-56, Apollo, w/Rev. Julie Kolacz of New Beginnings UMC



March 25
12:00pm

New Beginnings UMC 1559 PA-56, Apollo, w/Rev. Niki Atkinson of Apollo & Boiling Springs Presbyterian Churches



March 2026

CONGRATULATIONS to all those celebrating Birthdays:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------|
| 1 - Colleen Milie | 12 - Rich Mangus/93 rd | 17 - Tom Fruechtel |
| 5 - Bonnie Kunicki | 13 - Cindy Shaner | 24 - Karen Stanford |
| 6 - Don Rosensteel/86 th | 14 - Barbara Brunermer/85 th | 28 - Natalie Perry |
| 6 - Carmen Cypher | 15 - David Cable | 30 - Kathie Moore |
| 6 - Susan Jaros | 17 - Scott Held | |

CONGRATULATIONS to all those celebrating Wedding Anniversaries:

- 30 - Rich & Tammy Manko/35th

Members & Friends in our prayers: *Rose Haberchak, Cherise Rachal, Al Kochka, Ted Smith, Larry Moore, Barbara Orwell, Norman Cardaro, Fay Klingensmith, Don Rosensteel, James Swift, Melissa Swift, Megan Swift, Glenna Emanuel, Minnie McKay, Eddie VanDyke, Todd Watterson, Joe Mulhall, DeClan Cox, Geri Rosensteel, Nancy Kochka, Debbie Schultz Coulter, Orvil Smith, Michael Hooks, Thomas Coulter, Lavina Stefaniak, Frank Stefaniak, Jr., Kelly Gourley, Anthony Ward, Mark Otwell, Doug Rearick, Barry DeMay, Joey Valella, David Fallecker, Debbie Townsend, Sandra Rivera, Nancy Hart, Katie Loftus, Thomas Hileman, Tyler Stone, Eric Kennedy and Baby Lucas Michael.*

Members and friends in our continuing prayers: *Mary Ellen Emerick, Pastor Al Petrill, Pastor Jack Delk, Barbara Grance, Pastor Richard Grance, Ed Smith, Scott Aikens, Brian Stone, Jim Stone III, Heather Eppley, Al Kochka, Audrey & Susan Siems, David Ellison, Debbie Hill, Virginia Madison, Jack Tickle, Darlene Davis, Ed & Rose Haberchak, Bill & Diane Sloan, Luke Kanish, Tim Kanish, Dakota Stone, and Shane Carnahan.*

Our Homebound Members: *Jackie Wonders, Shirley Milanak, Debbie Zahumensky, Cindy Bush, Donna Wilver, Lillian Yamber, Annette Cholock, Judy Altman, Yvonne Hilty, Earliene Klingensmith, Frances Klingensmith, Jim Myers, Richard Mangus, and Tom Mangus.*

We ask God's care for the following Military Personnel and their loved ones: *Stephen Porter and Nevin Downey.*

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If you are in need of a pastoral visit or are in the hospital or have been in the hospital, please contact the office @ 724-478-1283 or Pastor Caroline 814-769-5662. The Pastor is unable to visit if she isn't alerted to your condition.



**Memorial Calendar
Open Memorials**



Altar Flowers \$50	N/A	April 12 & 26
Bulletins \$10	March 1, 8, 15, 22	April 5, 12, 19, 26
Celebrates \$10	March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29	April 5, 12, 19, 26
Wine \$15	March	N/A
Wafers \$15	March	N/A
Glasses \$10	March	N/A
Oil \$20	N/A	N/A

Please call or stop by the office to sign up.
The calendar fills up quickly so please check on dates before sending in your money.
Thank you!

THANKYOU!

*I want to thank my church family for all the cards, phone calls and gifts for my birthday.
They made my birthday more special!*

René Copeland

I would like to thank everyone for all of the Valentine cards. It really brightened my day!

Debbie Zahumensky

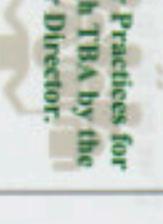
I would like to thank everyone for their cards and prayers.

Vince Milie



March 2026



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:30 a.m. Sunday School 11 a.m. Worship Annual Meeting & Baked Potato Bar	2	3 WELCA Meeting @ 1 p.m.	4 Pastor in the office Building & Grounds Meeting @ 9 a.m. Noon - Lenten Svc. @ Spring Church Lutheran Evening Worship @ 6 p.m.	5 Worship & Music Mtg. @ 10 a.m. Quilt Club Meeting @ 7 p.m.	6	7 14 Men's Breakfast @ Valley Dairy/Leechburg @ 8:30 a.m. Ladies Lunch Bunch-Meeting at the church @ 11 am to go to Villa Balnnea Quilt Club Sew-In
8 9:30 a.m. Sunday School 11 a.m. Worship Daylight Saving Time Begins	9 Lions Club Mtg. @ 6 p.m.	10	11 Pastor in the office Council Meeting @ 10:30 a.m. Noon -Lenten Service @ New Life Baptist Evening Worship @ 6 p.m.	12	13	14
15 9:30 a.m. Sunday School 11 a.m. Worship EASTER FLOWER ORDERS DUE	16	17 	18 Pastor in the office Noon - Lenten Service @ Apollo Free Methodist Evening Worship @ 6 p.m.	19 Quilt Club Meeting @ 7 p.m.	20 	21
22 9:30 a.m. Sunday School 11 a.m. Worship	23 Lions Club Mtg. @ 6 p.m.	24 Newsletter Assembly & Meeting @ 10 a.m.	25 Pastor in the office Noon - Lenten Service @ New Beginnings Evening Worship @ 6 p.m.	26	27	28 Quilt Club Sew-In
29  9:30 a.m. Sunday School 11 a.m. Worship	30	31				



March 2026



DATE	1	8	15	22	29 PALM SUNDAY
ASSISTING MINISTER	Tammy Manko	David Coulter	William Kerr	Carmen Cypher	Georgia Richardson
COMMUNION ASSISTANT	Carmen Cypher	Lisa Carnahan	Georgia Richardson	David Coulter	William Kerr
LECTOR	Kaylie Peace	Georgia Richardson	Carmen Cypher	René Copeland	Tammy Manko
CANTOR	Gregg LeMay	Gregg LeMay	Gregg LeMay	Gregg LeMay	Gregg LeMay
USHERS	Melvin Silvis Donna Stone Jack Tickle Beverly Tickle	Calvin Deemer Robbie Deemer Sandra Hollis Joe Marchitelli	Melvin Silvis Eloise Loughlin Kim Kneppshield Kim Harmon	Calvin Deemer Dorothy Doty Vivian Boyer Lisa Carnahan	Melvin Silvis Calvin Deemer Leland Geer Kevin Geer
GREETERS	Lisa Carnahan Kim Harmon	Lisa Carnahan Kim Harmon	Lisa Carnahan Kim Harmon	Lisa Carnahan Kim Harmon	Lisa Carnahan Kim Harmon
ACOLYTE	Robbie Deemer	Calvin Deemer	Melvin Silvis	Brennon Faulkner	Matthew Faulkner
ALTAR GUILD	Georgia Richardson Grace Olson	Robbie Deemer Dorothy Doty	Vivian Boyer Eloise Loughlin	René Copeland Kim Harmon	Carmen Cypher Marlonna Moore
PEW COMMITTEE	Lisa Carnahan	Lisa Carnahan	Lisa Carnahan	Lisa Carnahan	Lisa Carnahan
CAMERA PERSON	John Shaner	Kevin Geer	John Shaner	Kevin Geer	Lisa Carnahan

Please obtain your own substitute if these dates conflict with your schedule.
 Please notify the church office by Wednesday of any changes.
 If we are not in the office, you may leave a message on the answering machine.
 Thank You!



DATE	MAUNDY THURSDAY APRIL 2	GOOD FRIDAY APRIL 3	EASTER APRIL 5
ASSISTING MINISTER	William Kerr	X	Tammy Manko
COMMUNION ASSISTANT	Carmen Cypher	X	Melvin Silvis
LECTOR	David Coulter	Georgia Richardson	William Kerr
CANTOR	David Coulter	David Coulter	David Coulter
USHERS	Melvin Silvis Donna Stone Jack Tickle Beverly Tickle	NO COMMUNION	Calvin Deemer Robbie Deemer Sandra Hollis Carmen Cypher
GREETERS	Kim Harmon Sandra Hollis	Kim Harmon Sandra Hollis	Kim Harmon Sandra Hollis
ACOLYTE	Robbie Deemer	Melvin Silvis	Calvin Deemer
ALTAR GUILD	Georgia Richardson Robbie Deemer	X	Georgia Richardson Grace Olson
PEW COMMITTEE	Marlonna Moore	Marlonna Moore	Marlonna Moore
CAMERA PERSON	John Shaner	Lisa Carnahan	Lisa Carnahan



LOOKING AHEAD.....

April 2/Maundy Thursday

Soup Supper @ 5:00 p.m. & Service @ 6:00 p.m.

April 3/Good Friday

Service @ 6:00 p.m.

April 5/Easter Sunday

Sunday School @ 9:30 a.m. & Worship @ 11:00 a.m.

Easter Memorial Flowers



Please order

NO LATER THAN - March 15, 2026

() Tulip	Number _____	\$9.50
() Hyacinth	Number _____	\$9.50
() Daffodil	Number _____	\$9.75
() Lily	Number _____	\$10.75

To the Glory of God _____

In memory of _____

In Honor of _____

Name: _____

Amount Enclosed _____