

# 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

Southwestern  
Pennsylvania Synod  
Bishop Melissa Stoller  
412-367-8222

May 2026

Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America  
800-638-3522

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

### COUNCIL

Mary Beamer  
Lisa Carnahan  
Pr Caroline Clifford  
Carmen Cypher  
Cal Deemer  
Dorothy Doty  
William Kerr  
William Moore  
Cindy Shaner  
Leslie Smeltzer

Spring has sprung! It's such a relief to have the warmer weather! Of course, it's the end of April and beginning of May, so it can get cold again. But it's so nice that we are past the difficult winter we had! And it's Easter season! We read in 2 Corinthians 5:17:

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new".

### STAFF

Pr Caroline Clifford  
Ken Carnahan  
Lisa Carnahan  
Ben Coulter  
Dorothy Doty  
Gregg LeMay  
Georgia Richardson  
Leslie Smeltzer

Just like the weather, spring feels like a time to start things fresh. I'm looking forward to what comes next this spring! Use this time to pray for a renewed spirit as we progress through the Easter season into Pentecost!

Peace, Pastor Caroline

The Reverend Dr. Caroline E. Clifford, Pastor



## April Council Highlights



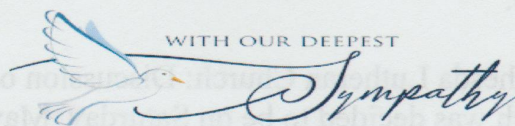
The council meeting was held on April 8, 2026, at 10:30 AM. The following is a summary of the meeting:

1. The meeting was led by President Bill Kerr. Devotions were led by Pastor Caroline.
2. Action items: Nothing new to report.
3. Two letters were received:
  - a. One letter was received from Bishop Melissa Stoller thanking us for the invitation for our celebration for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our building. She cannot attend the Sunday service and asked for more information on the Saturday event and dinner.
  - b. A letter was received from Bethesda Lutheran Church in Lower Burrell, PA asking to revisit our request from February 2025 to investigate the possibility of sharing a pastor. More information is included in New Business,
4. Treasurer's report: Partial payment for the chairlift was done. Lisa is still working on follow up on the Stitt Fund.
5. Pastor Report:
  - a. Pastor Caroline reported that the Lenten and Holy week services were well attended and thanked Lisa Carnahan for making all the soups for the Soup Supper on Maundy Thursday.
  - b. Pastor Caroline reported that surveys are beginning to be turned in.
  - c. Tammy Manko has finished taking pictures for the new pictorial Directory.
  - d. Synod Assembly registration ends on May 15, 2026, and we are still in need of a male and female to attend. Synod Assembly is June 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>.
  - e. Pastor Caroline approved Leslie Smeltzer's Vacation from May 1, 4-8 2026.
6. Old Business:
  - a. Surveys: Leslie Smeltzer reported that 28 paper surveys have been turned in. Pastor Caroline, Lisa Carnahan and Cindy Shaner volunteered, at the February meeting, to help input the information.
  - b. 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Church Building/Saturday, October 24, 2026. Dorothy Doty said that WELCA is taking charge of this Event.
  - c. 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Church Building/Sunday, October 25, 2026. It was suggested that we ask the bishop to preside at worship with Pastor Caroline assisting but Bishop Stoller has a previous Commitment. We will ask special guests to attend this worship service.
7. New Business:
  - a. Letter from Bethesda Lutheran Church: Discussion on a date to meet Bethesda Lutheran Church was decided to be on Saturday, May 9, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. at Valley Dairy in Allegheny Township. Bill will notify them to see if that is suitable for them. (This time has been subsequently changed.)
  - b. Friendship Day: Discussion was held that we may have a Friendship Day at First Lutheran to invite friends and family to join us; we are leaning towards Rally Day on Sunday September 13, 2026. We can invite people to join our Adult and children's Sunday School as well as worship as we begin a new church year.

## April Council Highlights - Continued

- c. Summer Community Worship & Picnic will be held on Sunday, August 9, 2026 @ New Beginnings Methodist Church in Spring Church. The service will start at 10:30 AM with a picnic following the service.
  - d. Summer Concerts at First Lutheran Apollo will be held on the third Sunday of the months June, July and August. The bands chosen to be invited were Randy Quinn, Kiski Valley Community Band and the Armstrong County Fireman's Band.
  - e. The Quilt Club will have a special sew-in day that they can stay over and sew through the night on October 9-10, 2026.
  - f. The Outreach Committee requested that they be permitted to sell hoagies to collect money for outreach projects. The sale will be April 12 – May 5, 2026. Pick up will be May 15, 2026, 4-6 p.m.
8. Standing committee reports:
- a. Building and Grounds:
    - i. Air conditioning units have arrived at Zecca Sheet Metal Shop. Bernie will begin work on them preparing them for installation.
    - ii. Building and Grounds are researching pricing of a new generator for the church as the current one only connects to lighting.
    - iii. Cleanup day is scheduled for Friday, May 8, 2026, 9 a.m. – noon.
  - b. Worship & Music: meeting April 23, 2026 @ 10 a.m.
  - c. Outreach/Service Committee:
    - i. Easter Cards with a small treat were mailed out to the homebound.
    - ii. A Hoagie Sale to collect money for many projects will begin next week with pick up on May 15, 2026. Pickup 4-6 p.m. Last day to order is May 5<sup>th</sup>.
  - d. Endowment Committee: - Next meeting TBD.
  - e. WELCA: Ham Loaves to be made at the end of the month, April 29-May 1. The last day to order is April 27<sup>th</sup>.
  - f. Finance Committee: A meeting will be held on April 15, 2026.
  - g. Safety Committee: A meeting will be held on April 22, 2026.

Next Council meeting will be held on May 13, 2026, at 10:30 AM.



***The sympathy of the congregation is extended to the family and friends of  
Mary Ellen Emerick upon her recent death on April 9, 2026.***

+Grant eternal rest unto her O Lord +  
+And may perpetual light shine upon her+



# MAY 2026



## Mark your calendars



**Ladies Lunch Bunch** will meet May 9<sup>th</sup> at Valley Dairy Restaurant in Leechburg at 11:30 a.m.

**Men's Breakfast Buddies** will meet May 9<sup>th</sup> at Valley Dairy Restaurant in Leechburg at 8:30 a.m.

## Reminders

The last day of Sunday School will be May 17<sup>th</sup>. Classes will start again after Labor Day.

Everyone is invited to wear **RED** on Pentecost Sunday, May 24<sup>th</sup>.

## Congratulations!!

**Paisley Kunicki**, granddaughter of Bonnie Kunicki, competed in the Sunburst Beauty Pageant that was held at the Greensburg Mall on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Paisley won Best Personality and was named Third Princess. She will go to Harrisburg to compete in the state Sunburst Beauty Pageant and Model Search on May 15th-17th.

Congratulations Paisley & Good Luck at the State Pageant!!

## Church Work Day



Building and Grounds will be having a work day on Friday, May 8<sup>th</sup> from 9 am to Noon. Everyone is welcome to come out and help with our Spring projects. We have jobs for everyone and we always have a fun time!! Please come out and help if you can. Lunch will be provided. If you are interested in helping, sign up sheets are in Tower Hall and the Narthex.



**VIBRANT FAITH**  
GOD SHINES THROUGH US

10365 SOUTH-WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA  
SYNOD ASSEMBLY

## Volunteers Needed

We are still in need of 2 volunteers (1 Male and 1 Female) to represent First Church at this year's Synod Assembly. The Assembly will be held on Friday, June 12<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, June 13<sup>th</sup> at PennWest California University. If you are interested in attending, please let Lisa know.

## New Members

Pastor Caroline will be having a new members class for anyone who would like to join the church. If you're interested, please let Pastor Caroline or the office know.



## Congratulations to the Class of 2026!!



**Cassie Ray**, granddaughter of Mel & Jackie Silvis, will graduate from IUP on May 9, 2026 with a degree in Cell & Molecular Biology with a Minor in Psychology.

**Emma Marie Frain**, granddaughter of Candy Emahiser, will graduate from IUP on May 9, 2026 with a B.A. in Psychology and a Minor in Child Development in Family Science. She will continue on for her Master of Education Applied Behavior Analysis Degree. She plans to work with autistic children.

**Kaylie Peace**, granddaughter of Bonnie Kunicki, will graduate from Greensburg Salem High School on June 4, 2026. She is looking forward to exploring new opportunities and is excited for the adventures ahead!

**Zane Beatty**, grandson of Bonnie Kunicki, will graduate from Apollo-Ridge High School in May. He has been accepted to IUP to study Middle School Math.

*We wish all of you success in whatever comes next, and joy in how you get there!!  
Congratulations!!*

### May's Memory Verse

#### Romans 15:13

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

THANK  
you

Dear First Church Family --

Thank you so much for all the wedding anniversary cards and wishes! We're blessed to have celebrated 35 years, and we're so thankful for our wonderful church family! We are fortunate to be part of such a loving, caring congregation!

Peace & Grace,  
Rich and Tammy Manko

Thank you to everyone for the many beautiful cards and prayers during my recent hospitalization and recovery. I appreciate every one of you and our wonderful church family!

Kindly,  
Sylvia Patterson



Thank you to everyone for the prayers and cards.

Leland Geer



By: Kimberly Knowle-Zeller

April 8, 2026

## Living Faithfully

### What do you hear?

Growing together – April 2026

#### **Focal verse**

“But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body” (Luke 24:1-3).

#### **Reflection**

A few months ago, our family listened to the audiobook of *The Vanderbeekers of 141st Street* by Karina Yan Glaser (Clarion, 2017), a story of a large family trying to save their home in New York City from a grumpy landlord. One quote in particular caught my attention: “It was amazing what the Vanderbeekers could hear when they weren’t trying to listen to anything.”

After finishing the book, we gathered with friends for a book club and went outside and listened. I watched kids and their parents close their eyes and tilt their heads up. The sun poured on our faces. We listened. We took in the silence that wasn’t really silence. When we stopped, we could hear dogs barking, a siren in the distance, birds chirping, the screech of tires and the wind rustling through the grass. In just a few minutes, we were able to hear more than if we had just walked outside without the focus of paying attention.

Lent is traditionally a time for devotion and attention, for listening to how God is meeting us in a season that lifts up prayer, fasting and giving. But now that we are living into the 50 days of Easter joy, how can we take that listening and apply it to the wider world around us? How can we really listen? How can we listen and not run around so much? How can we listen and put down our phones, schedules and to-do lists?

I wonder what the women first heard when they peered into Jesus' empty tomb. In their surprise at the emptiness before them, did they hear the drip of water droplets or the rush of wind over the rocks? Could they hear their own heart beating and the breaths one another took?

We're invited into this sacred act of listening too. God is here to meet us in both the silence and chaos of our lives. In just one breath, we can pause and tilt our head up and listen for the sounds around us. We can tune our hearts to God's presence through the act of listening and knowing that God lives, breathes and moves through all creation. We can stop, listen and pray for the world and people around us. We can pray that others will know God's love. We can listen and pray for peace.

This Easter season, may you know the comfort found in listening to God's voice. May you hear God proclaim, "Christ is risen, Alleluia!"

## Practices

- **Get outside and listen.** Take a few minutes to see what you hear when you step outside. Share as a family what you heard.
- **Read the Easter story together.** The *Spark Story Bible* (Sparkhouse, 2009) has a great telling of Jesus' resurrection. Imagine you were with the women on that first Easter. What did you hear? How did you feel? Put yourself in the story and imagine being a witness to the resurrection.

## Prayer practice

The alleluias are back! Make a habit of praying with alleluias this season. Easter lasts 50 days, and even amid the challenges of our lives and the world, we can still proclaim "Christ is risen!" Before meals you can pray: *Alleluia, Christ is risen. Thank you for this food and all those who are with us. Keep us mindful of those who find it hard to sing alleluia.*

Or when you bless your kids before school or at bedtime, you can say: *Alleluia, you are loved. Alleluia, God is with you.*

## About the author



Kimberly Knowle-Zeller is an ordained ELCA pastor, mother of two, spouse of an ELCA pastor and author of *Small Steps: Blessings to Lift Your Soul on the Pilgrimage of Life*, a collection of blessings. She lives with her family in Cole Camp, Mo. Her website is [kimberlyknowlezeller.com](http://kimberlyknowlezeller.com).

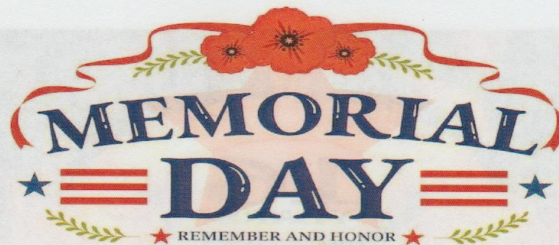


### Sunday Service Security Patrol

As part of the Safety Team one objective is to protect the congregation, during the Sunday Service. The 2<sup>nd</sup> verse of the first hymn, the church is patrolled to assure congregation safety. This patrol includes ground, first, and second floors. During the patrol the church's exterior doors are locked.



The Outreach Committee is selling Marianna's Hoagies and Pizzas to help with Outreach funding (mailings, gifts, food, etc.) Orders will be due by **May 5<sup>th</sup>** and pickup will be **May 15<sup>th</sup> between 4 pm – 6 pm** in the Fellowship Hall. Please help us make our goal! You can pick up your order forms in either the Narthex or the Tower Hall. Please make your checks payable to First Lutheran Church.



**“Our flag does not fly because the wind moves it. It flies with the last breath of each soldier who died protecting it.” — Unknown**

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 at 814-769-5662. The Pastor is unable to visit if she isn't alerted to your condition.

GriefShare®

## Grief Support Group

**Help and encouragement  
after the death of a loved one**

A GriefShare support group is a safe, welcoming place where people understand the difficult emotions of grief. At this 13-week group, you'll receive valuable guidance and tips, leading you to relief, comfort, and peace of mind.

### Contact Us Today

**Mondays, 6pm – 8pm  
May 4 – July 27, 2026**

First Evangelical Lutheran Church  
358 Main St. Leechburg, PA

To register, call 724-845-7518 or visit  
[servinggodgracefully.net/griefshare](http://servinggodgracefully.net/griefshare)

[griefshare.org](http://griefshare.org)



**16 YEARS**

**ANNIVERSARY**  
*We're Still Glad!*

I was glad when they said to me,  
"Let us go to the house of the Lord."  
-Psalms 122:1 NLT

**SUNDAY, MAY 17** AT NEW LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH  
319 N. 2ND ST.  
APOLLO, PA 15613

<b>BISHOP RASONIA NICHOLAS</b>	Services at <b>11:00 AM</b> & <b>3:30 PM</b>	<b>REVEREND FRED H. MCCREE</b>
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**PASTOR  
JUNE P. JEFFRIES**  
*Dinner served immediately  
following 11AM service*



## May 2026

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### **CONGRATULATIONS to all those celebrating Birthdays:**

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5 - Judy Altman	13 - Kevin Gibbons	17 - Peyton Manko
6 - Debbie Flickinger	14 - Kathleen Altemus	21 - Dot Doty
10 - John Shaner	14 - Leland Geer	21 - Debbie Kerr
12 - Luke Postle	15 - Sylvia Patterson 88 <sup>th</sup>	

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### **CONGRATULATIONS to all those celebrating Wedding Anniversaries:**

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3 - Kenneth & Lisa Carnahan/40<sup>th</sup>  
8 - Bill & Marlonna Moore/70<sup>th</sup>  
17 - Jack & Beverly Tickle/23<sup>rd</sup>

**Members & Friends in our prayers:** *Evelyn Stoughton, Family of Pastor Richard Grance, Jan Clepper, Jim Davison, Cherise Rachal, Family of Mary Ellen Emerick, Teri Mannarelli, Al Kochka, Nancy Kochka, Annette Cholock, Melissa, Leland Geer, Lillian Yamber, Vicki Held, Larry Flickinger, Anthony "Butch" Rodnicki, Sylvia Patterson, Shirley Milanak.*

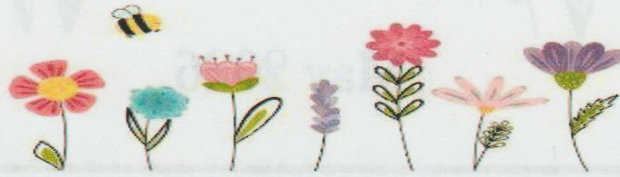
**Members and friends in our continuing prayers:** *Orvil Smith, Michael Hooks, Fay Klingensmith, Debbie Townsend, Pastor Al Petrill, Ed Smith, Scott Aikens, Brian Stone, Jim Stone III, Heather Eppley, Al Kochka, Audrey & Susan Siems, David Ellison, Debbie Hill, Virginia Madison, Jack Tickle, Darlene Davis, Ed & Rose Haberchak, Bill & Diane Sloan, Luke Kanish, Tim Kanish, Dakota Stone, and Shane Carnahan.*

**Our Homebound Members:** *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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*Memorial Calendar  
Open Memorials*



<b>Altar Flowers \$50</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>June 7, 14, 21 &amp; 28</b>
<b>Bulletins \$10</b>	<b>May 3, 10 &amp; 24</b>	<b>June 14, 21 &amp; 28</b>
<b>Celebrates \$10</b>	<b>May 3, 10, 17 &amp; 24</b>	<b>June 7, 14, 21 &amp; 28</b>
<b>Wine \$15</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Available</b>
<b>Wafers \$15</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>Available</b>
<b>Glasses \$10</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Oil \$20</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>

**Please call or stop by the office to sign up.  
Thank you!**

*Happy Mothers Day*

*Wishing a very Happy Mother's Day to all the moms, stepmoms, grandmothers, aunts and other amazing mother figures. May your day be filled with joy, love and appreciation!*






**It is almost time again for Summer Concerts  
and Vacation Bible School.**



**Watch the bulletin and next month's newsletter for more information!**

# May 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 <b>3</b> 9:30 a.m. Sunday School 11 a.m. Worship	 Choir Practices for May will be on Tuesdays at 6 pm	 <b>5</b> ORDER DEADLINE FOR PIZZA & HOAGIES WELCA Meeting @ 1 pm	<b>6</b> Pastor in the office Building & Grounds Meeting @ 9 am	<b>7</b> Quilt Club Meeting @ 7 pm	<b>1</b> Pick Up for Ham Loaves Noon - 1 pm	<b>2</b>
<b>10</b>  9:30 a.m. Sunday School 11 a.m. Worship	<b>11</b> Lions Club Mtg. @ 6 pm	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> Pastor in the office Council Meeting @ 10:30 am	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>  CHURCH WORKDAY 9 am - Noon	<b>9</b> Men's Breakfast Buddies will meet at Valley Dairy/Leechburg @ 8:30 am Ladies Lunch Bunch will meet at Valley Dairy/Leechburg @ 11:30 am Quilt Club Sew-In
<b>17</b> ASCENSION SUNDAY 9:30 a.m. Sunday School 11 a.m. Worship *Last day of Sunday School for the Summer	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> ELECTION DAY 	<b>20</b> Pastor in the office Food4Kids Packing @ 3 pm	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> Quilt Club Sew-In
<b>24</b> PENTECOST SUNDAY 11 a.m. Worship	<b>25</b> OFFICE CLOSED 	<b>26</b> Newsletter Assembly & Mailing @ 10 am	<b>27</b> Pastor in the office	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> HOLY TRINITY SUNDAY 11 a.m. Worship	<b>25</b> OFFICE CLOSED 	<b>26</b> Newsletter Assembly & Mailing @ 10 am	<b>27</b> Pastor in the office	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>



# May 2026



DATE	3	10	17	24	31
ASSISTING MINISTER	William Kerr	Tammy Manko	Carmen Cypher	Georgia Richardson	David Coulter
COMMUNION ASSISTANT	Georgia Richardson	David Coulter	Melvin Silvis	Tammy Manko	Carmen Cypher
LECTOR	Carmen Cypher	Lisa Carnahan	David Coulter	William Kerr	René Copeland
CANTOR	Gregg LeMay	Gregg LeMay	Gregg LeMay	Gregg LeMay	Gregg LeMay
USHERS	Calvin Deemer Dot Doty Sandra Hollis Joe Marchitelli	Melvin Silvis Donna Stone Beverly Tickle Jack Tickle	Calvin Deemer Robbie Deemer Kevin Geer Leland Geer	Melvin Silvis Kim Harmon Kim Knepschild Eloise Loughlin	Calvin Deemer Melvin Silvis Lisa Carnahan Vivian Boyer
GREETERS	Sandra Hollis Cindy Shaner	Sandra Hollis Cindy Shaner	Sandra Hollis Cindy Shaner	Sandra Hollis Cindy Shaner	Sandra Hollis Cindy Shaner
ACOLYTE	Matthew Faulkner	Calvin Deemer	Melvin Silvis	Robbie Deemer	Brennon Faulkner
ALTAR GUILD	Robbie Deemer Kim Harmon	Vivian Boyer Eloise Loughlin	Lisa Carnahan René Copeland	Dorothy Doty Marlonna Moore	Georgia Richardson Grace Olson
PEW COMMITTEE	Cindy Shaner	Cindy Shaner	Cindy Shaner	Cindy Shaner	Cindy Shaner
CAMERA PERSON	Kevin Geer	John Shaner	Lisa Carnahan	Kevin Geer	John Shaner

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!

