

# 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*

## June 2025

PASTORAL PARAGRAPHS

Southwestern  
Pennsylvania Synod  
Bishop Kurt Kusserow  
412-367-8222

Evangelical  
Lutheran Church in  
America  
800-638-3522

## The Future

There are some things in our future that we can examine and anticipate.

Bishop Kusserow contacted me with what I hope is very good news. He has someone in mind to assume pastoral leadership for our congregation. The only thing I know is that the candidate is female. I have worried (I was told I should have expected God would take care of this challenge!) This has been my concern since before I announced my retirement. Your charge will be to welcome a new pastor in your midst and learn to work with her.

I admit that I wonder how my future will work out after I am retired. Sometime I will make myself available to fill in as pulpit supply, but without being "the pastor" of a congregation. It will be an adjustment for sure.

The future always holds surprises and I am eager to learn what my future will be. In late September and early October Sue and I will make a trip around the country via Amtrak to visit with my family. That will be fun. And then learning to not have a charge to go to during the week—that will be the change for me.

I will continue to pray for you.

God bless us into our futures!

*Pastor Phil*

The Reverend Dr. Philip S. Ramstad, Pastor

COUNCIL  
Mary Beamer  
Lisa Carnahan  
Carmen Cypher  
Cal Deemer  
Dorothy Doty  
Kim Harmon  
Deb Kerr  
Pr Phil Ramstad  
Georgia Richardson  
Cindy Shaner

STAFF  
Pr Phil Ramstad  
Ken Carnahan  
Lisa Carnahan  
Dorothy Doty  
Ben Coulter  
Gregg LeMay  
Georgia Richardson  
Leslie Smeltzer

## May Council Highlights

1. At Council meeting time Dot had collected \$9,235. We need a little more than \$5,000 to make this goal towards our chair lift device.
2. Bethesda Lutheran Church of Lower Burrell decided to not pursue sharing a pastor with us.
3. Our God's Work, Our Hands project will be working in the "old" cemetery (below Riverview Cemetery) in September.
4. In his report, Pastor stated:
  - a. Leslie is doing very well in our office.
  - b. The Synod had a remote first session of our annual assembly to nominate candidates for bishop.
5. We had been planning to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in our present building, but we learned that while the cornerstone was laid in 1925, the building was not completed until 1926, so we are putting off that celebration until next year.
6. Dot sent a letter to Bishop Kusserow asking for guidance when Pastor retires.
7. Our air conditioners were inspected. One needs the compressor replaced and it is still under warranty, so a new compressor is on order and will be installed.
8. The retirement dinner for Pastor will be held July 26<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 p.m.
9. The Endowment Committee recommended to Council that the section of our by-laws be changed so that the congregation can take money out for capital improvements as long as the fund does not go below \$500,000.



Pentecost Sunday is June 8, 2025. Just a reminder to wear something **RED**!

**THANK YOU!**

To the Best Congregation,

Thank you doesn't seem enough to say to all of you. I cannot thank you enough for all the cards, gifts, luncheon, support and love over the past 18 ½ years I have spent daily with you as the Office Administrator.

God placed me in this congregation in 1962, and he had a plan for me that I didn't know would include being there day in and day out. What a blessing God gave to me! You have seen me through growing up, confirmation, Lutherlyn camp, being in the choir since I was a youth, marriage, Sunday school teacher, youth leader, VBS teacher, family weddings, births, illnesses and deaths. When I needed time away you were there for support in allowing me to get my work finished and spend the time I needed to be with my family. I am so grateful to have been able to spend that time with my family whenever they needed me and still be able to work. I am especially grateful for your love and support during my recent illness and life altering event. These events and times are something that can never be replaced. You are not only my friends, but my family and I love you all!

Thank You for allowing me the chance to work for you and with you to fulfill part of God's plan. It has been the most rewarding part of my work career and has made me a better Christian seeing things through your eyes and actions. I am looking forward to rest of the plan that God has for me! Thank You so much!

Love in Christ,  
Mary Beamer



**CONGRATULATIONS!**

*Anastasia Rabickow, granddaughter of Katherine Rabickow, graduated from  
Indiana University of Pennsylvania on May 10, 2025.*

THANK  
YOU!

I would like to thank everyone for sending cards and remembering me on my birthday!  
Debbie Kerr

### DRESSES and BRITCHES

On April 22, the ladies met for the last time until fall. Many lovely outfits for summer had been sewn since our March meeting. Shorts with tops, sleeveless dresses as well as dresses with sleeves, skirts and boys cargo pants with pullovers. Also, fleece throws and a pillow. A small contribution but still important in the overall picture.

Have a safe, memory-making summer.

Women<sup>of the</sup> ELCA 

There will be no WELCA Meetings for June, July & August. Enjoy your summer!



The sympathy of the congregation is extended to LouAnn Branthoover, Susan Jaros, Nancy Curran and families upon the recent death of Harry Branthoover on May 17, 2025.

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

*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 Phil @ 724-954-5228. He cannot visit if he is not alerted to your condition.*

# Living Lutheran

## Bridging together

By Sean Coffman February 12, 2025



*The completed bridge in the community of Iron Station, North Carolina. Photo courtesy of LDR Carolinas.*

In a groundbreaking collaboration, Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) and Menonite Disaster Service (MDS) have launched the “Bridging Together” initiative to restore connectivity in hurricane-affected regions of western North Carolina. The partnership aims to rebuild critical private bridges that were destroyed by Hurricane Helene in September 2024, providing vital access to homes and communities.

The initiative, coordinated by LDR Carolinas in cooperation with MDS, addresses the thousands of families that were stranded as bridges that connected homes to state-maintained roads were washed away. With over 5,000 bridges estimated to require rebuilding, the scale of the project is vast, but its impact will be life-changing. To address this challenge, MDS reached out to LDR and LDR Carolinas to collaborate on funding and constructing the bridges.

This partnership is not new. In early 2024, MDS discovered the need for a private bridge in Lincoln County, N.C., serving a community of over 20 families. Their engineer designed a long-lasting solution that would not only accommodate personal vehicles but also support a fully loaded tanker truck from the local fire department. Financial backing from partners such as LDR made this project possible. And even before Iron Station, LDR and MDS partnered to build bridges in West Virginia in the mid-2010s.

## A design for resilience and sustainability

The rebuilding efforts will use the Resilient Bridge Design pioneered by MDS, which has already been employed to construct over 130 bridges in West Virginia, Virginia and North Carolina. These structures are specifically designed for durability and efficiency, using wooden-decked steel beams supported by concrete abutments. Steel pilings are driven into bedrock to ensure stability, while the design minimizes ecological disruption and prevents debris accumulation. Each bridge can be constructed by a team of volunteers in approximately one week, demonstrating both the efficiency of the design and the power of community-driven initiatives.

But the partnership extends beyond construction. Both MDS and LDR Carolinas are actively fundraising and recruiting volunteers to support the project. Kevin King, executive director of MDS, said, "Volunteers from MDS and LDR Carolinas will be building bridges that will ultimately bring hundreds of people home." Maryn Olson, director of LDR, emphasized the broader mission of the initiative: "The goal of recovery is to get people back in their homes safely."

The effort is bolstered by collaboration with other organizations, including the American Red Cross, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and members of the North Carolina Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NC VOAD). These groups are contributing funding, securing permits, and offering logistical support to ensure the success of the project.

## A proven model of community resilience

The success of the "Bridging Together" initiative has already been demonstrated. In June 2024, MDS and LDR Carolinas completed their first bridge in Iron Station. This bridge endured the high waters brought by Hurricane Helene, proving its resilience and providing a lifeline to the community. For residents like Brandy Nichols, the new bridge symbolizes a return to normalcy. "Thank you is just not enough," she said. "I can go home now. If it rains, it's OK—I can go home!"

This success story underscores the transformative potential of the initiative, inspiring hope for the thousands of families who remain cut off from essential services and their communities. The anticipated cost of constructing each bridge is around \$50,000 to \$70,000. While FEMA and other sources may provide some funding, the partnership relies heavily on community support. Donations and volunteer participation are critical to achieving the project's goals. By uniting resources and efforts, the "Bridging Together" initiative aims to restore safe access for families and rebuild resilient communities.

### How to give

**Online**  
[ELCA.org/GiveWH](https://ELCA.org/GiveWH)  
[ELCA.org/GiveLDR](https://ELCA.org/GiveLDR)

**Phone**  
800-638-3522

**Mail**  
Make checks payable to "ELCA World Hunger"  
or "Lutheran Disaster Response" and mail to:  
ELCA  
P.O. Box 1809  
Merrifield, VA 22116-8009

## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

A special congregation meeting will be held on **Sunday, June 29, 2025** to vote on:

1. Amendment/Addition to the bylaws:

Proposed Addition - The Endowment Committee may authorize a reduction of the principle of the Endowment Fund by not more than 1/10 of the principle per annum provided that the principle is not reduced below \$500,000.00.

2. Platform Lift/Chairlift Project.



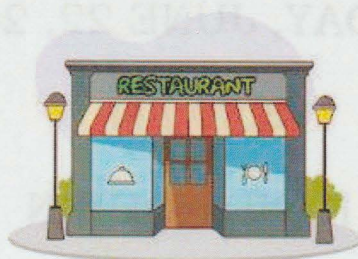
## 2025 Summer Concert Schedule

Take a break on your Sunday afternoon and join us for our annual Summer Concerts at First Church Apollo. Be sure to invite your friends and neighbors! All concerts start at 3:00 p.m.

Sunday, June 22 – Randy Quinn

Sunday, July 20 – Gibbons Big Band

Sunday, August 17 - Alle-Kiski Community Band



### Men's Breakfast Buddies

Men's Breakfast Buddies will be

Saturday, June 14, 2025

@ 8:30 a.m.

### Ladies Lunch Bunch

Ladies Lunch Bunch will be

Saturday, June 14, 2025

Meeting at the church at 11:00 am  
to go to The Lamplighter in Delmont

COMING SOON



CONCERT AT  
FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH  
214 North Pennsylvania Avenue, Apollo

SUNDAY, JUNE 22, 2025

3:00 PM

RANDY QUINN

SOUTHERN GOSPEL MUSIC

FREE WILL OFFERING WILL BE TAKEN FOR RANDY



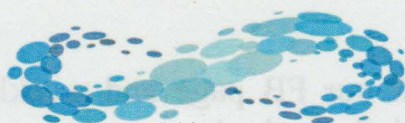
Mark your calendars for Pastor's Retirement Dinner  
on July 26, 2025 at 4:30 pm. in the Social Room.  
See more details in this month's newsletter!



### *June's Memory Verse*

PSALM 118:24

This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

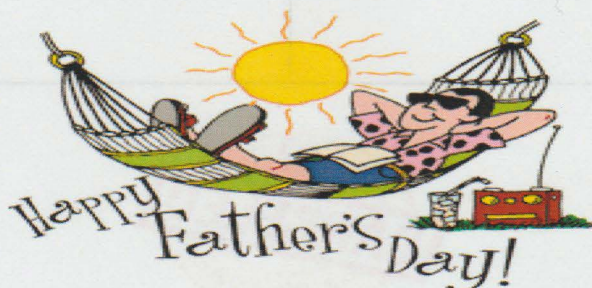


**CHANGING &  
UNCHANGING**  
GREAT IS YOUR FAITHFULNESS

2025 SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD ASSEMBLY

The 2025 Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly will be held at  
La Roche University on June 12 – June 14, 2025.

Bill & Marlonna Moore will be our representatives this year.

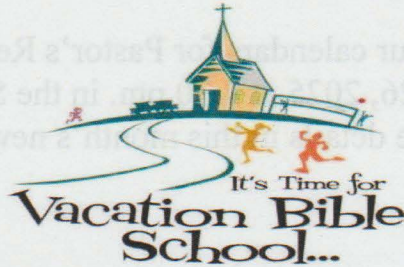


Happy Father's Day to all the amazing dads, stepdads, grandfathers, and father figures!

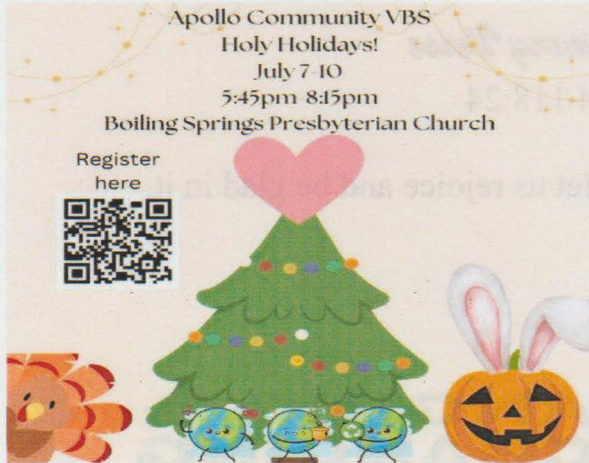
Your love, guidance, and support make a world of difference.

Enjoy your special day!

A reminder that any announcements that you would like included in the newsletter need to be given to the Office by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month. Printing of the newsletter begins before the day of assembly.



## APOLLO COMMUNITY V.B.S.



First Lutheran was asked to donate 100 fruit cups, small bottles of water and Capri Sun drink pouches for the Apollo Community VBS. If you would like to donate towards this, please see Lisa Carnahan.

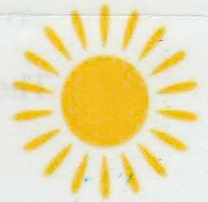
Watch our FB page and weekly bulletins for sign up information.

## FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH ADULT – V.B.S.

Save the dates! Come and enjoy the same fun you did as a kid at our Adult Vacation Bible School. Join us for some Bible fun and laughter!

August 11 – 14  
6 p.m. – 8 p.m.

Watch our FB page and weekly bulletins for more information!



The October 25, 2025, 100th anniversary celebration of our church is **cancelled**.

Sunday, June 14, 1925, the cornerstone was laid and the construction began. The building was not completed until 1926 and the dedication service was held on October 31<sup>st</sup>, 1926.

Council decided to celebrate the completion date instead of the cornerstone date. Our 100th Anniversary will be celebrated next October, 2026!



June 2025



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**CONGRATULATIONS to all those celebrating birthdays:**

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4 – John Hollis	14 – Gracen Feerst	22 – Greg Kerr
7 – Brittany Setaro	16 – Nancy Kochka	22 – Shawn Davis
7 – Denise Burns	17 – Lisa Carnahan	23 – Laurie Meier
8 – Pearl Held	18 – Bodie Coulter	24 – Cindy Bush
10 – Gregg LeMay	20 – Amara Sacik	26 – Shirley Milanak 90 <sup>th</sup>

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

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- 6 – Steven & Taryn Olson – 10<sup>th</sup>  
8 – John & Sandra Hollis – 51<sup>st</sup>  
17 – Rick & Debbie Williams – 53<sup>rd</sup>  
21 – Kevin & Mary Gibbons – 28<sup>th</sup>  
25 – Tanya & Rich Frain – 31<sup>st</sup>  
29 – Ben & Cara Coulter – 12<sup>th</sup>

**Members & Friends in our prayers:** *Family of Harry Branthoover, Lavina Stefaniak, Bobby Thompson & Family, Arline Calhoun, Pearl Held, Frank Stefaniak, Jr., Kelly Gourley, Don Ryan, Anthony Ward, Darwin Moore, Ernie Miller, Deacon Amy Santoriello, James Swift, Megan Swift, Ann Krafick, Mark Otwell, Doug Rearick, Barry DeMay, Joey Valella, David Fallecker, Debbie Townsend, Sandra Rivera, Jean Nulph, Nancy Hart, & Katie Loftus, LaMar Burnham, Thomas Hileman, Tyler Stone, Eric Kennedy and Baby Lucas Michael.*

**Members and friends in our continuing prayers:** *Mary Ellen Emerick, Mark Kestner, Pastor Al Petrill, Pastor Jack Delk, Barbara Grance, Pastor Richard Grance, Ed Smith, Scott Aikens, Brian Stone, Jim Stone III, Heather Eppley, Barbara Altmire, Al & Nancy 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:** *Donna Wilver, Lillian Yamber, Annette Cholock, Judy Altman, Arline Calhoun,, Yvonne Hilty, Earliene Klingensmith, Frances Klingensmith, Richard Mangus, Tom Mangus, Elinor Moody and Diane Papaila.*

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

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*The Mission of First Church is  
to make God's good news  
in Jesus Christ a reality  
in the world*

## Memorial Calendar Open Memorials

*Stop by the office and sign up for the days you want. Dates are starting to fill in. We prefer you to sign up rather than ask Leslie to do it.*

Flowers \$50	June 1, 22 & 29	-----
Bulletins \$10	June 8, 15, 22 & 29	July 6, 20 & 27
Celebrates \$10	June 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29	July 13, 20 & 27
Oil \$20	-----	Open for July

**Openings:** Please do not assume by sending in money that you will get that date.  
Others may have already taken the date you want.

### Update -Clothesline for a Cause

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Platform Lift Project. As of May 18th, we have raised \$9,235. To meet our \$15,000 goal, we still need to raise **\$5,765!**

The Artira platform lift allows passengers in wheelchairs to travel between floors and includes a chair lift for individuals with limited mobility.

If you are unable to attend church and/or watch our video broadcasts, you can mail your donation to Apollo First Evangelical Lutheran Church, P. O Box 275, Apollo, PA 15613. Make sure you designate it for the "Platform Lift Project."

Your help to make this happen would be appreciated.



Chairlift  
folded up  
Wheelchair  
base




Unit Folds up  
when not in use.



# June 2025



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b> 11 a.m. Worship	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> Pastors' Text Study @ 10 a.m.  Crochet Club @ 6:30 p.m.	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> Pastor in the office @ 10:00 a.m.  Worship & Music @ 5:30 p.m.  Quilt Club Mtg. @ 7 p.m.	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> 11 a.m. Worship Pentecost Sunday 	<b>9</b> Meals on Wheels Board Mtg @ 1 p.m.  Lion's Club Mtg. @ 6 p.m.	<b>10</b> Pastors' Text Study @ 10 a.m.	<b>11</b> Council Mtg @ 10:30 a.m.	<b>12</b> <div>Synod Assembly at LaRoche University 6/12 - 6/14/25</div>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> Men's Breakfast @ Valley Dairy @ 8:30 a.m.  Ladies Lunch Bunch Meeting at church at 11 a.m. to go to The Lamplighter/Delmont
<b>15</b> 11 a.m. Worship Trinity Sunday 	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> Pastors' Text Study @ 10 a.m.	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> Pastor in the office @ 10 a.m.  Safety Mtg @ 10 a.m.  Ministerial Assoc. @ 11 am  West Haven Comm @ 2 p.m.  Quilt Club Mtg. @ 7 p.m.	<b>20</b> 	<b>21</b> Quilt Club Sew-In
<b>22</b> 11 a.m. Worship  3:00 pm - Summer Concert/Randy Quinn	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> Pastors' Text Study @ 10 a.m.  Newsletter Assembly & Mailing @ 10 a.m.	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> Pastor in the office @ 10 a.m.	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Quilt Club Sew-In
<b>29</b> 11 a.m. Worship  Special Congregation Meeting	<b>30</b>					



# June 2025



DATE	1	8	15	22	29
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	Georgia Richardson	David Coulter	William Kerr	René Copeland
CANTOR	David Coulter	David Coulter	David Coulter	David Coulter	David Coulter
USHERS	Melvin Silvis Calvin Deemer Jack Tickle Beverly Tickle	Melvin Silvis Dot Doty Carmen Cypher Donna Stone	Calvin Deemer Robbie Deemer John Hollis Sandra Hollis	Melvin Silvis Eloise Loughlin Kim Kneppshield Kim Harmon	Melvin Silvis Calvin Deemer Vivian Boyer Joe Marchitelli
ACOLYTE	Matthew Faulkner	Calvin Deemer	Melvin Silvis	Robbie Deemer	Brennon Faulkner
ALTAR GUILD	Robbie Deemer Kim Harmon	Marlonna Moore Dot Doty	Lisa Carnahan René Copeland	Eloise Loughlin Vivian Boyer	Georgia Richardson Grace Olson
PEW COMMITTEE	Leslie Smeltzer	Leslie Smeltzer	Leslie Smeltzer	Leslie Smeltzer	Leslie Smeltzer
CAMERA PERSON	Lisa Carnahan	John Shaner	Lisa Carnahan	Calvin Rodnicki	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!

