

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

August 2026

Southwestern
Pennsylvania Synod
Bishop Melissa Stoller
412-367-8222

Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America
800-638-3522

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

It has been a hot and lazy summer, yet I still have anxiety as I have had much to get done. I am also anxious about what is going on here in our country and the world. So, I wanted to include a couple of Bible passages about being calm and resting.

Philippians 4:6-7 - ⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

John 14:27 – [Jesus said,] ²⁷Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

These words are so calming to me. I will keep them in my heart when I am at the church or at home and give a cuddle to my dogs when I think of these words!

Peace, Pastor Caroline

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

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

The Reverend Dr. Caroline E. Clifford, Pastor

July Council Highlights

The council meeting was held on July 15, 2026, at 10:30 AM. The following is a summary of the meeting:

1. The meeting was led by President Bill Kerr on Zoom. Devotions were led by Cal Deemer.
2. Action items:
 - a. Pr. Arter accepted our invitation to be Master of Ceremonies for the 100th anniversary. Invitation list needs to be developed
 - b. The third meeting on Policy & Procedures was held on 7/14/26.
 - c. Dave Coulter is going to contact Raimondo Restoration about issue of cornerstone cracking if removed and replaced. Buildings and Grounds will need to make a recommendation on this.
 - d. Cindy Shaner and Cal Deemer attended MOW meeting as co-liaisons. MOW was receptive and had a good meeting.
3. Correspondence: None.
4. Treasurer's report:
 - a. S&T Bank will be issuing a check from the Stitt Fund. Lisa and Dave will discuss replacing the funds into accounts that were used for special projects.
 - b. Bill Kerr will draft an acknowledgement letter to Joseph Matson, brother of Barbara Altmire, related to receiving a check from Barbara's estate.
 - c. Lisa reported that First Church is named as a beneficiary of a life policy for Elinor Moody, and paperwork needs to be submitted.
5. Pastor Report:
 - a. The Community Worship/Picnic will be held August 9th @ 10:30 am at New Beginnings Methodist Church. First Lutheran will be responsible for bringing desserts and chips/dips. Pastor Caroline will be preaching, and First Lutheran will provide the bulletins. Information was put in the July Newsletter and the weekly announcements. Pr. Caroline attended an organizing meeting along with Cal Deemer; the committee would like to hold a raffle for door prizes and asked that each church provided gifts for the raffle.
 - b. Pastor Caroline has received 4 requests for new members. Two of the people, Suzette Fulton and Larry Paulhamus will be received. Two will be accepted as transfers, Brianny Porter and Emily Porter.
 - c. Pastor Caroline will receive four children for First Holy Communion on August 2, 2026. Dot is organizing a small reception afterwards.



July Council Highlights – Cont'd

6. Old Business:

- a. Surveys: Pr. Erin Jones was expected to present the results of the Vitality Survey after the council meeting, by Zoom.
- b. 100th Anniversary Church Building/Saturday, October 24 and 25, 2026. Bill Kerr & Dot Doty to work on list of invitees. Pr. Caroline and Gregg LeMay are working on a Blessing of the Building service to be held prior to the dinner.
- c. MOW Update: A letter and Administrative Regulations were sent to Erin Williams. Some items provided clarification on rules to MOW.
- d. God's Work/Our Hands: We are working on what we can do for this day. There is going to be a workshop on 9/1/26 from 8:30-noon. The council will discuss further at the August council meeting.

7. New Business:

- a. Approved Administrative Regulations. This information was sent in a letter to Erin Williams.
- b. Mission Lab – Book Study and Year Long Participation: Currently putting a pause on the yearlong participation in Mission Lab. Will be considering internal book study of Funding Forward. Bill Kerr and Dot Doty are doing the book study with the synod.

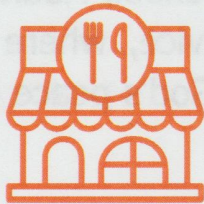
8. Standing committee reports:

- a. Building and Grounds: Roof repairs by Bella do not appear to be satisfactory; Cal and Mary recommended to withhold payment until completed satisfactorily.
- b. Worship & Music: Next meeting July 16th, at 10 AM
- c. Outreach/Service Committee: Working on Adult VBS.
- d. Endowment Committee: - Nothing to report.
- e. WELCA: No meetings for July and August. WELCA will be doing the reception for the First Holy Communion families.
- f. Finance Committee: None
- g. Safety Committee: John Shaner will update the EOP with documentation for the emergency/safety aspects of the new chair lift. Annual inspection will need to be done by a third party.
- h. Good of the Order: After the meeting, we had a meeting on Zoom for a presentation on the Congressional Vitality Survey.

Next Council meeting to be held on August 12, 2026, at 10:30 AM.



AUGUST 2026



Ladies Lunch Bunch will meet August 8th at the church at 4:00 pm to go to Old Route 66 Grille.

Men's Breakfast Buddies will meet August 8th at Valley Dairy Restaurant in Leechburg at 8:30 am.

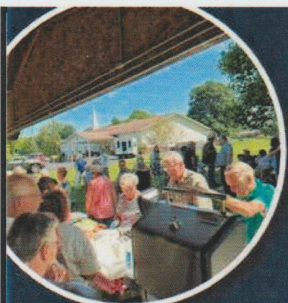


Summer Concert

Kiski Valley Community Band will have a summer concert at First Church on August 16, 2026 at 3:00 p.m. Take a break on your Sunday afternoon and join us! Everyone is welcome!

Mark your calendars

Mark your calendars! Sunday School will start on Sunday, September 13, 2026 at 9:30 a.m.



**JOIN THE COMMUNITY FOR A
MORNING OF WORSHIP**

SUNDAY, AUGUST 9 @ 10:30AM
NEW BEGINNINGS UMC, SPRING CHURCH
WITH MEMBERS OF UAMA (UNITED APOLLO MINISTERIAL
ASSOCIATION)
PICNIC & FUN FOLLOWING WORSHIP

Just a reminder that there will be no worship at First Church on August 9th. There will be a Community Worship and Picnic at New Beginnings United Methodist Church at 10:30 am. First Church will be responsible for bringing desserts and chips/dips (hot or cold) for the picnic. Don't forget to bring your chair! Please sign up by August 2.



Rally Day: Family & Friendship Day September 13, 2026



Join us on Rally Day as we worship, learn, and grow in faith together. Whether you are new to our church or have been part of our congregation for years, we would be glad to see you. Invite a friend or family member to Children's Primary Sunday School, Adult Sunday School, and our Sunday Worship and Music Service, where we will share a message of hope and faith. Come rest in God's peace and find encouragement for the weeks and months ahead.

Family and Friendship Day is a wonderful opportunity to welcome new friends into our church family. Through prayer, personal connection, warm hospitality, and a simple invitation, the day can be meaningful and enjoyable for both you and your guest. Pastor Caroline Clifford and the congregation warmly invite friends and family members to Family and Friendship Day on Sunday, September 13, 2026. We look forward to seeing you then!

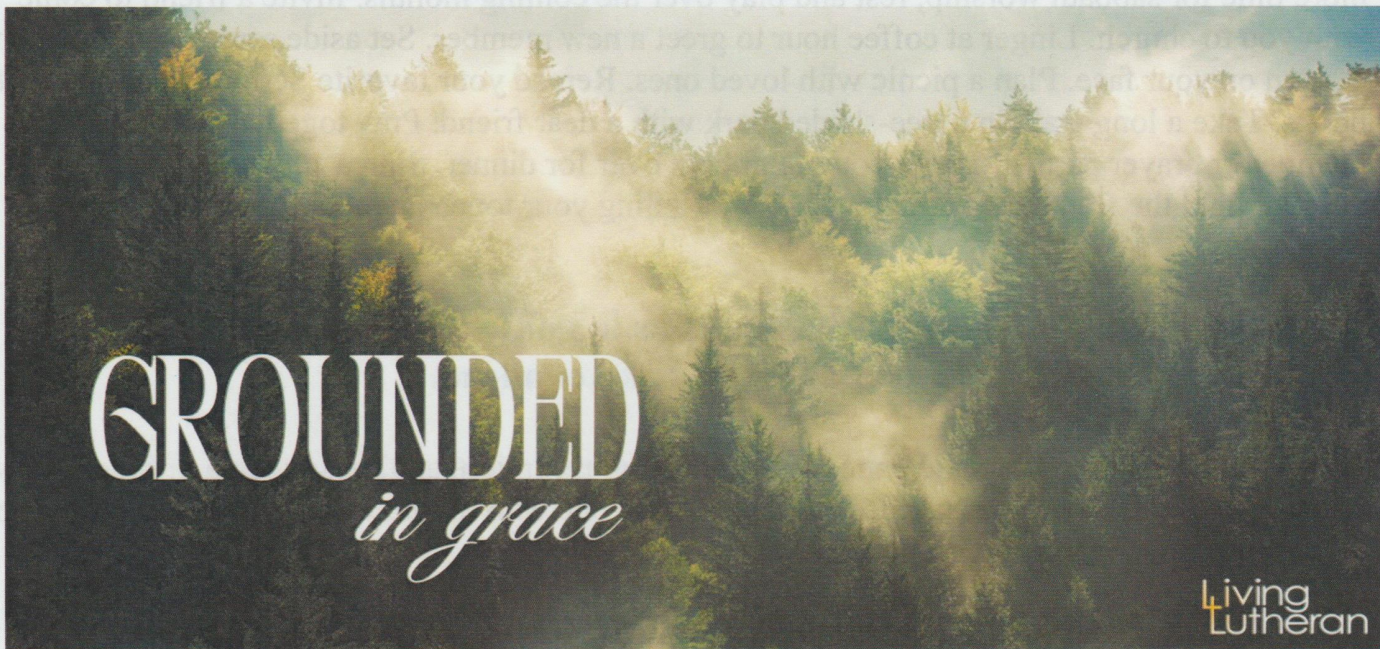


If you are in need of a pastoral visit or are in the hospital or have been in the hospital, please contact the office @ 724-478-1283 or Pastor Caroline at 814-769-5662. The Pastor is unable to visit if she isn't alerted to your condition.



**God Creates
God Provides
God Protects
God Loves**

Reminder! Any announcements that you would like included in the newsletter need to be given to the office by the 20th of the month. Printing of the newsletter begins before the day of assembly.



GROUNDING

in grace

Living
Lutheran

ELCA

By: Mindy Holland

June 11, 2026

Voices of Faith

GROUNDING IN SABBATH

The world has grown crazier than usual; life as we knew it has tilted and won't right itself. This takes energy to process and navigate, energy we'd rather pour into work or study, into cherished relationships and communities. More people seem to be growing sick, or breaking bones, or losing heart and dying. It's hard on the heart and soul to carry all this, to keep going forward each day with faithfulness, courage and grace.

We remind ourselves that God remains sovereign, that Jesus is Lord. Christ's Spirit keeps working creatively and vibrantly through us, in our parishes and service organizations, amid our camps and campus ministries. We watch for and often find the helpers and the God moments, glimpses of hope and positive change. We count our blessings. Yet the weight of it all still encumbers the soul. Even breathing deeply takes more attention and time.

Some days I want to scream for it all to stop, for everyone to step back and just *wait*. Then I remember: though I can't make the world pause, I can choose a different rhythm for myself with God's help by honoring and embracing the gift of sabbath. Our Lord commanded sabbath not only that we might take one day in seven for worship and praise, thanksgiving and communion, yet also that we would take that wholly holy day to stop and lay it all down: the lists, responsibilities and unrelenting details; the conflicts and sheer craziness of the world. We're called to let one day in seven nourish our spirits with community, as we surrender life's burdens and recall we're but creatures—mortal, fragile, yet deeply beloved.

However busy you've become, however important your role or leadership, I adjure you to make more time for sabbath worship, rest and play over the coming months. Invite a friend to come with you to church. Linger at coffee hour to greet a new member. Set aside screens and sit with the sun on your face. Plan a picnic with loved ones. Reread your favorite Scriptures and favorite books. Take a long walk in a tree-shaded park with a dear friend. Pray together with a family member or prayer partner. Invite your neighbors over for dinner. Sing a silly song with little ones, or hold the frail hands of beloved elders, letting your touch and your presence become a song of love.

Taking weekly sabbath time grounds us in godly play and refuels us for the demanding work yet ahead.

Whatever your age, rise up and dance at the wedding reception, anniversary gala or block party, even if you don't have a partner. Be the joyful, bold one who invites others to the dance floor or who starts the conga line. Yes, you can!

Taking weekly sabbath time grounds us in godly play and refuels us for the demanding work yet ahead. Amid this oppressive season, we'd do well to interweave sabbath pauses even within each day, strategic moments of laughter and quiet, of prayer and spaciousness.

During a particularly intense evening while preparing for a fundraiser, tempers were growing short. One of my young alumni, a member of the planning team, stopped everything and said matter-of-factly, "We need to pray." She led us in a short yet beautiful petition, asking God's blessing upon the event and for a spirit of cooperation and peace. It stopped me in my tracks. Her prayer drew us out of a frenzied fuss into a united sabbath space of looking to Jesus and seeking his face. Her courage and clarity realigned the evening as we focused on Christ's presence.

Even as the world's craziness intensifies, remember that small, daily acts of invitation, play, prayer and connection can reinvent and redirect someone else's day by allowing others to feel seen, included, heard—even loved. Gentle summons and timely prayers, quiet walks and dance-filled entrances, Sabbath slivers alight with God's love just might save the day. Trust that our Gentle Shepherd can use the tiniest gestures born of love to communicate holy grace and to send out ripples of peace-building hope beyond our knowing.



About the Author:

Mindy Holland is the "Grounded in grace" columnist. A minister of Word and Service, she is the chaplain of the Lutheran Campus Ministry at the University of Delaware in Newark and author of *Wind-Borne Sister*.



If you would be interested in sharing your musical talents during our Sunday worship service (or know someone that might be interested), please see Gregg LeMay after worship or complete the following form and return to the office.

Name	Child/ Adult	Child's Age		Instrument	Contact Info



Congregational Vitality Survey



The results of the Leadership and Congregational Vitality Survey were recently presented to the Church Council by Rev. Erin Jones, Assistant to the Bishop of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod. A Congregational Meeting will be scheduled at a later date to share the results with members and active participants. In addition, all Church Committees are expected to meet to set goals for 2027, welcome new members to serve, increase participation, and strengthen engagement. The date is yet to be determined. Watch the bulletin and newsletter for more details!



WIDOWS & WIDOWERS LUNCHEON

Tuesday, August 11th

Noon

New Beginnings UMC | 1559 State Route 56, Apollo



*Join us for a Luncheon along
with a devotion and fellowship
among widow and widowers.*

For Reservations, please call the church office at 724-478-4525
or email nbumcapollo@gmail.com by Tuesday, August 4th.

Mark Your Calendars for these Upcoming
Widow/Widower Luncheons

October 13th

December 8th



APOLLO UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PRESENTS

“DINNER AND A BAND”

SATURDAY, AUGUST 15

401 1ST STREET, APOLLO

DINNER anytime between 5PM & 7PM

**THE KISKI VALLEY
COMMUNITY BAND at 7:00 PM**



FREE WILL OFFERING FOR THE BAND ~ DINNER PROCEEDS WILL SUPPORT AUPC GENERAL FUND





August 2026



Congratulations to all those celebrating Birthdays!

2	Leslie Smeltzer	13	Grace Olson - 86 th	25	Matthew Cable
4	Thea DePanics	17	Tanya Frain	25	Jack Tickle - 89 th
5	Esther Knell - 88 th	17	Rose Haberchak	26	Joanne Newingham - 92 nd
6	Mary Gibbons	19	Sue Burkett	26	Evelyn Stoughton
7	Vivian Boyer	20	Shirley Whitlinger - 90 th	30	Tammy Manko
9	Connie Davis	20	Mason Perry	31	Ken Bush
10	Paisley Kunicki	23	Richard Manko		

Congratulations to all those celebrating Wedding Anniversaries!

14	Joe & Harriet Marchitelli - 33 rd
17	Bill & Debbie Kerr - 52 nd
21	Rob & Chris Gibbons - 27 th
24	Jack & Kim Harmon - 52 nd
25	Scott & Leanne Schraeder - 25 th
29	Regis & Ronna Linn - 3 rd

Members & Friends in our prayers: Family of Al Kochka, Christian Cancino, Family of Jean Nulph, Brittany Coulter Setaro, Tyler Miller, Kelsey Wilson, Larry Flickinger, Annette Cholock, Bryan Fancella, Melissa, Baby Luke, Tanya Stone, Kelly Gourley, Ashlee Crum, Don Rosensteel, Geri Rosensteel, Baby Hollis, Michael Toland, Karen Cook, Jan Clepper, Jim Davison, Cherise Rachal, Teri Mannarelli, Nancy Kochka, Anthony "Butch" Rodnicki, Shirley Milanak.

Members and friends in our continuing prayers: Carolyn Shanor, Thomas Hileman, Barry DeMay, Orvil Smith, Michael Hooks, Fay Klingensmith, Debbie Townsend, Pastor Al Petrill, Ed Smith, Scott Aikens, Brian Stone, Jim Stone III, Heather Eppley, 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: Vicki Held, Debbie Zahumensky, Cindy Bush, Donna Wilver, Lillian Yamber, Annette Cholock, Judy Altman, Yvonne Hilty, Earlene 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.

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

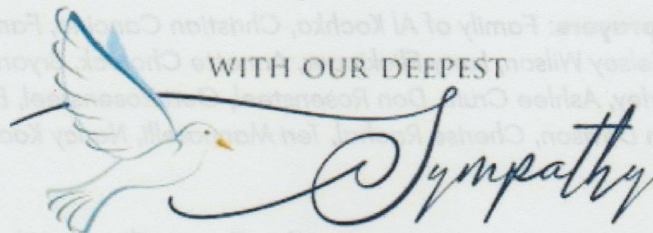


Memorial Calendar Open Memorials



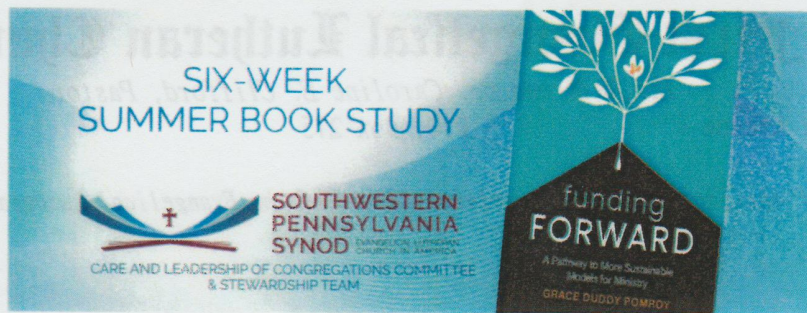
Altar Flowers	August 2 & 30	September 6 & 20
Bulletins \$10	August 2	September 6 & 27
Celebrates \$10	August 2, 16, 23 & 30	September 6, 13, 20 & 27
Wine \$15	N/A	N/A
Wafers \$15	N/A	N/A
Glasses \$10	N/A	N/A
Oil \$20	N/A	N/A

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



We extend our deepest sympathies to Nancy Kochka and her family on the recent passing of her husband, Albert Kochka, on July 19, 2026 and her sister, Jean Nulph, who passed away on July 11, 2026. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers during this time of grief.

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



Funding Forward: A Pathway to More Sustainable Models for Ministry

Two Church Council members are participating in a summer book study focused on how funding and mission are essential to sustaining church ministries. The book's pathways, stories, and narratives address declining attendance, aging congregations, and budget challenges while offering congregations a transformative roadmap to align with God's mission, renew community connections, and develop attainable ministry practices.

Options are being considered to offer the book study to congregation members and active participants in the near future through weekly or bi-weekly sessions. The book includes ten chapters organized into two main parts:

Part 1: Building a Strong Foundation

Part 2: What Might God Be Calling Us to Do?

If you are interested in joining the book study, please contact Dot Doty or Bill Kerr.

Meeting dates have not yet been determined. Each session will last about one hour and may be offered both in person and virtually.



GO BAGS

A Go Bag is located at each of the four exits. Exit 1, (front doors) the Go Bag is located under the table between the doors, Exit 2, (Tower Hall Door) it's located on top of coat rack, Exit 3, (3rd Street Door) and Exit 4, (Kitchen Door exit) the Go Bags are hanging on walls.

Items in Go Bags are: Stop the Bleed Kits, First Aid Kit, Scissors and Tweezers, Antiseptic solutions and antibiotic ointments, Tape (Duct Tape, Masking Tape, Scotch Tape, etc.), Pen, Pencils, and Paper, Flashlights and extra batteries, Whistle (to get everyone's attention).

First Evangelical Lutheran Church

The Reverend Dr. Caroline E. Clifford, Pastor

214 N Pennsylvania Avenue
(724) 478-1283

P.O. Box 275

Apollo, PA 15613
office@flcapollo.org

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

July 20, 2026

Mr. Joseph P. Matson
3171 New Hampshire Drive
Lower Burrell, PA 15068

Dear Mr. Matson:

On behalf of the Church Council and the Congregation of the First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Apollo, thank you for the most generous bequest in memory of your beloved sister Barbara M. Altmire. The memorial funds will be wisely used for general operations that directly support the mission and ministries of our Church.

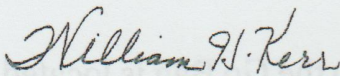
Throughout her lifetime membership, Barabra was very active at First Church. She was a former Sunday School teacher and previously served on the Church Council, Worship and Music Committee, and Strategic Planning Committee. Barbara was member of the Women's Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (WELCA), which provides support for special activities, bereavement dinners, and community outreach.

Barbara valued and embodied the motto "first class all the way" by her grace and kindness, classic style, and sophistication. She was a woman of deep faith and loved and enriched the people in her midst.

Barbara leaves a legacy of respect and dignity – a legacy that continues to inspire those who knew her through her principle-centered leadership, kindness, and unwavering support for others.

We at First Church will always fondly remember Barbara and her husband Jim as good and faithful servants of God and for all of their time, talent, and treasures given to the Glory of God and our Congregation.

Respectfully,



William H. Kerr
President, Church Council

Cc: Church Council
Chair, Finance Committee

AUGUST



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2 11:00 am - Worship First Holy Communion 	3 	4	5 Pastor in the office Building & Grounds Meeting @ 9:00 am	6 Quilt Club Meeting @ 7:00 pm	7 	1
9 10:30 am - Community Worship & Picnic @ New Beginnings 	10 Lions Club Mtg. @ 6:00 pm	11	12 Pastor in the office Council Meeting @ 10:30 am	13 Worship & Music Meeting @ 10:00 am	14	15 Men's Breakfast Buddies will meet at Valley Dairy/Leechburg @ 8:30 am Ladies Lunch Bunch will meet at the church at 4:00 pm to go to Old Route 66 Grille Quilt Club Sew-In
16 11:00 am - Worship 3:00 pm - Summer Concert/Kiski Valley Community Band	17	18	19 Pastor in the office Safety Meeting @ 10:00 am	20 Quilt Club Meeting @ 7:00 pm	21	22 Quilt Club Sew-In
23 11:00 am - Worship	24 Lions Club Mtg. @ 6:00 pm	25 Newsletter Assembly & Mailing @ 10:00 am	26 Pastor in the office	27	28	29
30	31					



AUGUST



DATE	2	9	16	23	30
ASSISTING MINISTER	Tammy Manko		William Kerr	Carmen Cypher	David Coulter
COMMUNION ASSISTANT	Georgia Richardson		David Coulter	Lisa Carnahan	Carmen Cypher
LECTOR	Tammy Manko	C O	René Copeland	Georgia Richardson	William Kerr
CANTOR	David Coulter	M M	David Coulter	David Coulter	David Coulter
USHERS	Calvin Deemer Robbie Deemer Kevin Geer Leland Geer	U N I T Y	Melvin Silvis Donna Stone Beverly Tickle Jack Tickle	Calvin Deemer Vivian Boyer Sandra Hollis Joe Marchitelli	Melvin Silvis Kim Harmon Kim Knepshield Eloise Loughlin
GREETERS	Lisa Carnahan Kim Harmon	W O	Lisa Carnahan Kim Harmon	Lisa Carnahan Kim Harmon	Lisa Carnahan Kim Harmon
ACOLYTE	Kim Harmon	R S	Brennon Faulkner	Calvin Deemer	Robbie Deemer
ALTAR GUILD	Robbie Deemer Eloise Loughlin	H I P	Georgia Richardson Grace Olson	Kim Harmon Marlonna Moore	Vivian Boyer Lisa Carnahan
PEW COMMITTEE	Marlonna Moore		Marlonna Moore	Marlonna Moore	Marlonna Moore
CAMERA PERSON	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!



SUMMER CONCERT

Kiski Valley Community Band



Sunday, August 16, 2026 • 3:00 PM

First Lutheran Church

214 North Pennsylvania Avenue

Apollo, PA 15613

FREE WILL OFFERING • ALL ARE WELCOME

♪ ★ Please Join Us! ★ ♪

