



The Tower

A PUBLICATION OF **FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Leechburg, PA



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Our mission:

"We are a people called together into the life-transforming ministry of the Gospel, empowered to share our lives for the blessing of the world."

From the Pastor's Desk

Year of the Lord's Favor

Happy New Year!

Perhaps I should ask, is it a happy new year? It may be if you are planning a wedding, preparing for the birth of a child, or will be going on a long-awaited vacation. Most of us, though, are likely anxious about what 2024 will bring. War rages on in Gaza and Ukraine. The economy continues to struggle. A contentious presidential election awaits. 2024 will also be a year of major change for our church, as we will vote to share my call with Cross Roads Presbyterian Church.

Change and uncertainty weigh heavily on our souls. But as the Body of Christ, our outlook is shaped by the words of the prophet Isaiah and spoken by Jesus at the beginning of his ministry: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Isaiah 61:1-2a, Luke 4:18-19).

In the light of these promises, we look at the future not with dread but with hopeful expectation. Saving grace is promised to all who are afflicted. But will you respond to this promise with faith?

Our worry and dread is not the result of God's failure to act, but our failure to trust God and obey his word. We do not persist in prayer. We allow ourselves to become distracted by the cares and enjoyments of this world. We try in vain to control what cannot be controlled. We fail to change what is in our power to change. We despair because things are not the way they used to be nor the way they should be.

To have faith is to believe that God will do what God has promised to do. By putting God first, we allow God to shape what our future will be. We allow God to transform us so that we can see God's purposes fulfilled. We trust God to meet our needs so that we can meet the needs of others. We embrace change and grieve our losses in the hope of resurrection. We face each new day with confidence that God's goodness awaits us.

This new year is a gift because God uses time to draw you closer to himself and lead you in the way of salvation. The certainty of God's faithfulness is the one certainty we have, and the only one we need.

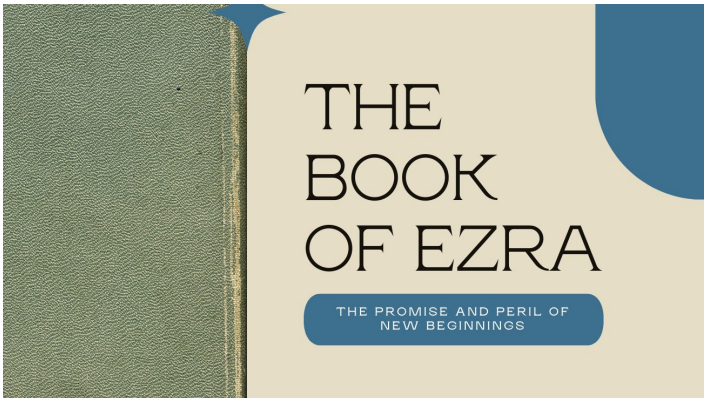
In Christ's love,

+ Pastor Jim

VISIT US ONLINE AT WWW.SERVINGGODGRACEFULLY.NET



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WINTER BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, January 3 and 17 at 6:30

You can also participate on Zoom by visiting zoom.us or calling (301) 715-8592 and entering meeting ID# 950-761-3304 .



FRIDAY, JAN. 5—6:30pm

January's movie is
Elf!

There will be a light dinner and movie theater popcorn! Bring your friends! Everyone is welcome.

Presented under CVLI
License #5944303

THIS HOLIDAY, DISCOVER YOUR INNER ELF.



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH PRESENTS **CHILI** **COOK-OFF**

SAT. FEB 17 BRING THE HEAT! 12-2:00 PM

Prizes for the best chili!

358 Main St. Leechburg, PA
servinggodgracefully.net | 724-845-7518



Contact Doreen Smeal with questions (724-448-4188 or doreen.smeal@gmail.com)



Thank you for all of your cards, gifts, and prayers for me and my family at Christmas! You are a blessing!
+Pastor Jim

Thank you for the beautiful gift basket.
-Sara Rupert



Council Notes

Ministry Sharing Update

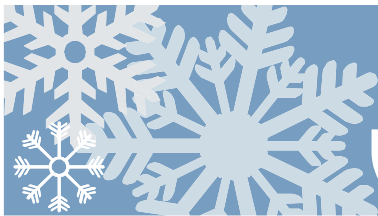
A draft agreement was reviewed by the council and recommendations were made. The draft will be forwarded to the Joint Ministries Council and voted on by the congregation at the January 28 congregational meeting.

New Council Officers

President: Sandy Smythe; Vice President: John Smail;
Secretary: Alicia Szarek



The Leechburg Food Bank is searching for volunteers to drive the UHaul truck to and from Armstrong Community Action in Kittanning to receive and deliver food for our monthly distributions. Each volunteer would be needed four times per year, usually on the fourth Tuesday of the month, from 8:30am until about 11am. Please contact Pastor Jim or Robin Patton (412-977-8094) to volunteer.



JANUARY

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Omitted from the public newsletter to protect members' privacy



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JANUARY

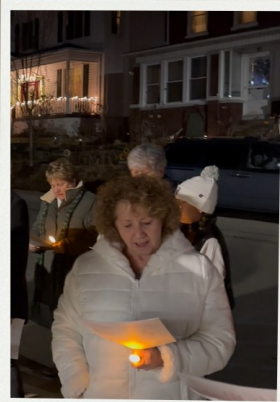
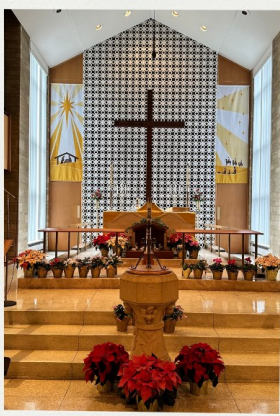
Servants

	Assisting Ministers	Acolytes	Altar Guild	Counters	Food Pantry
7	Jason Delp	Jillian Boarts	Doreen Smeal Lynette Israel	David Moran John Smail	Doreen Smeal
14	Margaret McKallip	Spencer Libengood	Donna Crawford Sandi Kulick	Doreen Smeal Margaret McKallip	Sandy Smythe
21	Alicia Szarek	Jacob Boarts	Diane Kuhn Lois Bowser	Andi Moran Alicia Szarek	Debbie Smail
28	John Smail	Josey Smorey	Janis Hill Kathy Munko	John Smail Margaret McKallip	Donna Crawford
2/4	John Smail	Jacob Boarts	Debbie Smail Michelle Baldesberger	Amanda Graham Sandy Smythe	



*Thank you
for voting
us THE
BEST
PLACE TO
WORSHIP!*





SERMON SERIES

Jan. 7—Baptism of Our Lord

Beginning of Good News

Psalm 91:9-12

Mark 1:4-20

Jan. 14—2nd Sunday after Epiphany

Parables in Mark

Psalm 126

Mark 4:1-34

Jan. 21—3rd Sunday after Epiphany

The Gerasene Demoniac

Psalm 89:1-4

Mark 5:1-20

Jan. 28—4th Sunday after Epiphany

Jairus's Daughter Healed

Psalm 131

Mark 5:21-43

Feb. 4—5th Sunday after Epiphany

Beginning of the Good News

Psalm 122

Mark 6:1-29

Thank
& you

Thank you to all our musicians,
decorators, carolers, youth, and
everyone who made this Christmas
one to remember!



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Give
ONLINE
EASY. FAST. SECURE.

Your gifts make a difference!

Please continue to give generously. To support our church with your offerings, visit our website at <http://www.servinggodgracefully.net> and click GIVE ONLINE. All major credit cards and e-checks are

[Monthly Sponsors]

Candle Oil Sponsor

Given by Randy Dunmire in memory of
Amy Dunmire

Bulletin Sponsor

available



The Clothing Closet

Saturday, January 20, 9:00—1:00

The Clothing Closet volunteers meet every Monday morning at 9am—12pm to sort clothing and keep things running smoothly. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Kathy Munko at (724) 845-8974 or by email at kathymunko@hotmail.com.

FOOD PANTRY



THE LITTLE FREE PANTRY NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT!

Support the ministry through monetary gifts marked "Little Free Pantry" or by donating the following non-perishable items: Pasta side dishes, Spaghetti, Pasta sauce (no glass, please), Instant potatoes, Pop Tarts, Macaroni and cheese boxes, Cereals (in single-serving size), Fruit cups, Pudding cups, Peanut butter, Snack crackers in individual packs, Tuna in cans or pouches, and Shelf-stable milk. Thank you for making a difference!



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get^CONNECTED



Like us on Facebook and stay connected with all that's happening in our church:

[facebook.com/servinggodgracefully](https://www.facebook.com/servinggodgracefully)

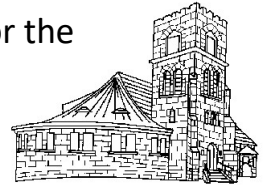
Join our Facebook Group **First Lutheran and Friends** to share prayer requests, communicate about events, and more!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/472072791043479>

Do you have something you would like to publish in the next newsletter? Contact the church office: **felc@salsgiver.com** or **724-845-7518**

The Tower deadline for the January newsletter is

Jan. 24



We are now on **You**Tube

Worship with us Live at 9:30 or catch up any time!

Subscribe to our channel to grow our livestream and spread the good word about our church!

youtube.com/@servinggodgracefully

Pastor James Arter's Office Hours

TUESDAY 9:00 AM—10:00 AM
WEDNESDAY 9:00 AM—12:00 PM
THURSDAY 9:00 AM—12:00 PM

Contact information:

Email: pr.jim@comcast.net

Office: 724-845-7518

Home: 724-212-7240

930 Wildlife Lodge Rd. Apt. 302

Lower Burrell, PA 15068

Parish Administrator: Deborah Smail

Office hours: Wednesdays 8--1

Church Treasurer: Ruth Sloan

rae_rae1963@yahoo.com

Council President: Sandy Smythe

mainesmythe@live.com



Want to read Pastor Jim's sermons?

Check out his BLOG online at jamesarter3.blogspot.com



Ink Cartridges

Bring your empty cartridges to the church and help us reduce the cost of office supplies!



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January 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31 New Year's Eve ■ 9:30AM Worship	1 New Year's Day	2 ■ 6:30PM Bible study	3	4 ■ 6:30PM Movie Night	5	6
7 ■ 8:30AM Chancel Choir Rehearsal ■ 9:30AM Worship ■ 10:45AM Council Meeting ■ 1:00PM Confirmation Class	8	9	10 ■ 6:00PM Joint Ministries Council	11	12	13
14 ■ 9:30AM Worship ■ 10:45AM Contemporary Choir Rehearsal ■ 10:45AM Messy Church ■ 1:00PM Joint Ministries Council	15 Martin Luther King Jr. Day	16 ■ 6:30PM Bible study	17	18	19 ■ 9:00AM Clothing Closet Open	20
21 ■ 8:30AM Chancel Choir Rehearsal ■ 9:30AM Worship ■ 1:00PM Confirmation Class	22 ■ 8:00AM Food Bank Packing	23 ■ 9:30AM Food Bank Distribution ■ 6:00PM Food Bank Distribution	24	25	26	27
28 ■ 9:30AM Worship ■ 10:45AM Contemporary Choir Rehearsal	29	30	31	1 Groundhog Day ■ 6:30PM Movie Night	2	3



*Join Our
Family
of Faith*



Our church family is growing, and we invite you to be a part of it! Please speak to Pastor Jim if you wish to be received into membership.



ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, January 29 after worship

We will approve our annual report and vote on a formal agreement to share Pastor Arter's call with Cross Roads Presbyterian Church.



TREASURER'S FINANCIAL SUMMARY FOR NOVEMBER 2023

November 2023 Treasurer's Report:

Balance October 31, 2023	22,001.55
Receipts	7,221.79
Disbursements	(12,573.98)
Balance November 30, 2023	16,649.36

BREAKDOWN OF BALANCE:

	Balance 10/31/23	Receipts November	Disbursements November	Balance 11/30/23
Current	(77,487.77)	6,242.99	12,093.08	(83,337.86)
Building Fund	25.00	0.00	0.00	25.00
Kipp Trust Distribution & Interest	59,972.74	0.00	0.00	59,972.74
Benevolence	3,422.14	0.00	0.00	3,422.14
Reimbursables/Dedicated Account	2,453.52	237.80	140.30	2,551.02
Bell Tower Fund	19,650.28	0.00	0.00	19,650.28
Clothing Closet	3,895.98	741.00	740.00	3,896.98
Bush Trust	9,670.26	0.00	0.00	9,670.26
Tax Liability Accounts	399.40	0.00	(399.40)	798.80
<u>TOTALS</u>	22,001.55	7,221.79	12,573.98	16,649.36

November 2023 Abiding Gifts & Memorials Report: CD-Matures 9/18/24-MIF:

Balance 10/31/23	8,393.14	Balance 11/30/23	36,004.52
Receipts-Interest	5.59		
Balance 11/30/23	8,398.73		

January - November 2023 FLC Mission Fund Report:

Balance 01/01/23	12,034.47		
Receipts	5,175.00		
Disbursements	(3,618.23)		
Balance 11/30/23	13,591.24	Ruth Sloan	
		Treasurer	



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358 Main St.

Leechburg, PA 15656

724-845-7518

Jesus loves...

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Worship SERVICE

Sundays—9:30

Livestream on YouTube

youtube.com/@servinggodgracefully

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