



# First News

First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Mifflinburg, PA

## From Our Pastor...

### CHRISTIAN IDENTITY, CHARACTER, AND COMMITMENT

I believe it would be safe to assume that the readers of this article would identify themselves as Christian; after all, you are receiving this article in a congregational newsletter. I would like us to ponder a bit as to our understandings of what it means to call ourselves Christian. Do we call ourselves Christian because we believe in God? In Jesus? In the Holy Spirit? Are our beliefs summed up in creedal formulations like the Apostles' and the Nicene, which we profess in our weekly worship? Do we refer to ourselves as Christian because we somehow attach ourselves to the concepts of forgiveness, salvation, heaven, and eternal life? Do we identify ourselves as Christian because of the benefits we hope to receive from God's promises? Are our Christian beliefs a fearful wager against a possibility of nothingness and finality?

These questions are important and vital to the manner in which we conduct our lives. That is, how does our identification of ourselves as Christian impact not only our cerebral beliefs but also the ways in which we behave? How related is our Christian identity to our character formation and life commitments? The motivation behind and the direction of our beliefs will most likely be played out in and through our daily actions and commitments. In other words, the depth of our beliefs will be revealed in the kind of lives we lead, in

our participation within the Christian community, and in in Christian witness before the world.

Do we understand our Christian identity as that which moves us beyond merely believing in Jesus as our Savior to intentionally listening to and following Jesus as our Lord? That is, by identifying ourselves as Christian, are we willing and able to put our beliefs into action, to bear witness that our Christian faith speaks both to God's promises of forgiveness and heavenly, everlasting life as well as to the empowerment we receive in Jesus to follow his lead in the presence of the Kingdom of God in the here-and-now and to serve him by loving and caring for one another as he loves us. Is our Christian identity tied as much to life's concerns in our daily activities and in our relationships with each other as it is to the promise of heaven and eternal life?

I raise these issues because there is a discernable wide gap between the numbers of folks who identify themselves as Christian from the number of those who indicate that they are part of the church. Further, there is also a noticeable gap between those who identify themselves as members of a church and those who participate actively in the worship and service life of a congregation, i.e. the difference between congregational membership rolls and the number of bodies in the pews on Sunday mornings. Also, there seems to be evidence that some who see themselves as active in the church are only interested

in some aspects of ministry and are not engaged in the whole mission of the church.

Being a Christian is the most wonderful gift we have been given. But it is not only a gift but also an opportunity to be utilized in our shared commitment and participation as the body of Christ, empowered, fed, and sustained by the living presence of Jesus, to engage in justice and righteousness and hope for all.

Are we ready and willing in our commitments to listen to and follow our Lord Jesus whenever and wherever he leads us to bear witness in word and deed to the kind of life he alone can offer, and to share that understanding in an active presence and participation in the life of the church? The biblical witness of and to Jesus presented One whose beliefs were matched in his actions. Can and will the same be said about us? Is our Christian identity simply a safeguard for a safe and secure eternal future against threat, danger, and finality or is it the character formed in us by the living presence of our Lord Jesus that we may be conformed and committed to living our lives in service to one another, fully equipped with the belief and hope Jesus has in us?

In the matter of Christian identity, maybe actions do speak louder than words.

*Blessings and peace,  
Pastor John*



2017

### Staff & Council Members

- Rev. John Yost, Pastor
- Diane Scott, Director of Music
- Heather Klose, Church Administrator
- Cher Girtan, Asst. Church Adm.
- Tammie Sheesley, Housekeeper
- Paul Houtz, Sexton
- Harry Boyer, Council President
- Jeff Mensch, Vice President
- Barb Randecker, Secretary
- Cher Girtan, Treasurer
- Deanna Billow, Council
- Gary Girtan, Council
- Liz Loss, Council
- Bill Musser, Council
- Jane Moore, Council
- Jim Schwartz, Council
- Tanna Stenger, Council
- Logan Mensch, Council

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## Congregational Meeting



The **Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting** will be held **Sunday, November 19th**, immediately following worship. On the agenda will be: Council elections, budget discussion and any other pre-determined topics. The following is a synopsis of the 2018 proposed budget:

**Salary & Benefits:** **\$120,109—increase \$15,753**

Add Supply Pastor allowance, Staff salary increase 2%, Delete "Facilities Manager" @ \$15,000 and add "Housekeeping" @ \$10,400 and "Sexton" @ \$11,700 positions, Increase FICA to allow for salary changes, Includes "Parish Contribution" of \$50,400

**Worship & Music:** **\$2,050 – decrease \$250**

**Office:** **\$10,400 – same**

**Service:** **\$350 – same**

**Christian Education:** **\$1,600 – decrease \$200**

**Fellowship & Recreation:** **\$500 – same**

**Outreach:** **\$350 – increase \$200**

**Church Property:** **\$48,100 – increase \$2,700**

Increase "General Church Maintenance" \$1,000, Increase "Janitorial Supplies" \$200, Increase "Electricity" \$500, Increase "Fire & Liability Insurance" \$1,000

**Synod Benevolence:** **\$15,450**

**Misc:** **\$500**

**Total:** **\$199,409**

*\*Detailed budget available in the office*



## 4th Annual Advent by Candlelight

**Sunday, December 3rd**

We look forward to this wonderful opportunity to relax, meet new friends, enjoy a delicious dessert, and meditate with our sisters in Christ as we focus our hearts on the true meaning of Christmas, the celebration of Jesus' birth. Please mark your calendars and plan on attending this event.

I am looking for Table HOSTESS-ES for the evening. A hostess will be responsible for decorating a table for 8 and providing a dessert (or two). Tables can be as elegant or as simple as you wish, but should incorporate candles. If you would be interested in being a Table Hostess please contact Liz or Libby Loss at 570-966-1606 or eloss31@gmail.com.

## First News

## Community Meals

The Community Meal Committee is looking for a few good folks to help serve meals on the first Saturday of each month. We begin preparing the meal at 9:00 and are usually done by 1:30. You can come for an hour or 2, or stay the whole time. We serve between 50 and 60 people each month. This is a great way to help reach out to our community. Your help would be greatly appreciated. Please Contact Libby Loss @966-1606 or Sue Jows @ 966-3644 if you can help.

Meal serving time: 11AM-12:30PM.



**Please Join Us**

**Thanksgiving Eve Service will be held on Wednesday, November 22nd, at 7PM, at First Lutheran.**



## Christ's United Happenings.....



An All-You-Can-Eat Pot Pie Supper will be held on Sunday, November 4th at 3:30 PM. Adults \$9, Children ages 6-12 \$5 and children 5 and under are free. Take-outs will be available. Pot Pie also on sale by the quart for \$8.



On Sunday, December we (4-Bells) will start at 3:00 p.m. and travel to Lewisburg to start and travel westward. We hope to be able to sing to our members who are in nursing homes, assisted living or are shut-in. Refreshments will follow the caroling. Warm bodies and hearts are more important than singing talents.



Sunday Family Game night is planned for, November 12th, beginning at 6PM. People of all ages are asked to bring games to share, such as cards, checkers, Can Slam, etc. Ice cream is planned because we want to "build a sundae on a Sunday".



**Advent Family Day** will take place on the First Sunday in Advent, December 3rd. After the Koinonia Kafe following worship, we will decorate our sanctuary and church for the Christmas.



Christ's United Lutheran Church will be having a stand at the Christkindl Market again this year. Please stop by and purchase some of their delicious foods. Baked Potatoes, Schnitz und Knepp, and bon bons.





## November Birthdays

Betsy Fickes	11/03	Aria Gessner	11/14
Don Hower	11/03	Kyle Galer	11/15
Edna Ammon	11/04	Sybil Spotts	11/19
Harry Boyer	11/07	Keith Sawyer	11/21
Angela Mincemoyer	11/08	Logan Stenger	11/21
Doris Sheesley	11/08	Sherry Sundberg	11/22
Jeannie Sawyer	11/10	Tanna Stenger	11/23
Alexandria Scott	11/10	Lori Bailey	11/24
Nicole Gessner	11/12	Dwayne Page	11/25
Linda Schnure	11/12	Jim Schwartz	11/30
Alexa Hackenburg	11/13		
Zoey Long	11/13		



Please reserve **Saturday morning, Nov. 25!** We will be decorating the church for the Christmas season beginning at 9 AM.



### Christmas Poinsettias

Although it seems very early to start thinking about Christmas, our poinsettia orders are due at the greenhouse by early November.

Order forms are available in the office. Orders are due at the office no later than Sunday, Nov. 5th.



**ATTENTION COOKIE BAKERS:** We would like to give each family that attends the December 2nd Community Meal a plate of Christmas Cookies. If you would be willing to donate 2-3 dozen cookies we would greatly appreciate it. We will plate them, so you can just put them in a disposable container. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the hallway. The doors of the church will be open Friday morning, December 1st, from 9AM-12AM, so that you can drop them off. Please put them in the kitchen. Thank you for helping to spread Christmas spirit with others.

-The Community Meal



We cannot thank our congregation enough for all the support you have shown us over the years. We have been able to touch the hearts of many, and have grown spiritually ourselves from the trips and activities we have attended. This would not have happened without the help and support of our congregation. To show our appreciation, we are inviting, all those who have helped or supported us in any way, to an Appreciation Breakfast. This breakfast will be held, Sunday, November 19th at 9:00AM in the downstairs social hall, and hosted by the youth of our congregation. Please plan to attend so that we may be able to give our thanks to you for your love and support. -FELC Youth Groups



Dinner & Devos for November will be held, Sunday, November 5th, at 6PM at Kim Sawyer's house. Dinner will be Waffles!

**Sunday, November 5th, 12:00 PM,** meet at the Methodist Church parking lot to TAG Homes. PLEASE BRING FRIENDS!!



**Sunday, November 12th, 12:00 PM,** meet at Methodist Church parking lot to divide into teams and collect food and then sort in the church gym. PLEASE BRING FRIENDS!!



## College & Military Care Packages

We have 24 college/military students! All of them will have finals the first week of December and we want to once again surprise them with a Care Package from our church family. Due to the number of packages we want to send, we are asking YOU to pitch in and HELP! This is a great way to get started on the holiday feeling of giving for an individual or a family activity. Be creative - get a box and fill it with goodies! Then return it to the church Multi Purpose Room on/before Sunday, November 26th and the Youth will seal them up and mail them out that week. A list is posted, of the students, on the bulletin board and please jot your name to the right of the student's name. Also, in lieu of making a box, you can donate \$20 and the items can be purchased and put together for you. Any questions see Kim Sawyer.

# First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Mifflinburg, PA

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Office Hours: MON-THURS, 9:00-2:00

Address Service Requested



## WORSHIP SCHEDULE

First Lutheran will continue with  
one worship service beginning  
at 10:30 AM.

Sunday School begins at  
9:15AM.



The First Evangelical Lutheran  
website is up and running!!

Please visit [FELCMifflinburg.org](http://FELCMifflinburg.org)  
and see what's happening.

Submit any comments and or an-  
nouncements you'd like to be posted  
to the church office.

*When you are aware of situations requiring pastoral care,  
such as births, deaths, hospital admission, serious illness, etc.,  
please notify Pastor John Yost at: 570-837-9232 (cell/text)  
or e-mail, [pastorjohn@4bellschurch.com](mailto:pastorjohn@4bellschurch.com)*

