



THE CHIRPS FOR FORKS FOLLOWERS

Forks Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church - 253 Forks Church Rd. - Leechburg, PA 15656

Forks Church Office: 724-845-6627 Sunday Worship – 11:00am

Email: churchforks@gmail.com

Forks Church website: www.forkschurch.com

From the Office of the Interim Pastor: The Rev'd Dr Scott Dennis, PhD

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Last month, we reflected on our life's journey crossing over from our pilgrimages through Lent to our pilgrimage together through Eastertide. One of our favorite Easter stories concerns our Lord Jesus encountering two of His disciples on a walk, or a pilgrimage, on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus. Perhaps, then, it is still helpful, if not also light-hearted, to restate what I remember my mom taught me to say as a little boy: April showers bring May flowers and Mayflowers bring Pilgrims. Since the May flowers will be in full bloom due to our April showers, then I guess with all these May flowers around us, that, along with the story from the road to Emmaus, what does it mean to be a pilgrim? Should we undertake our own pilgrimages? If so, then why do pilgrimages matter?

One of my friends and colleagues, Ben, undertook a pilgrimage several years before the Covid lockdown. He walked along the El Camino de Santiago way, which is a 500-mile footpath across northern Spain. As a Protestant Pastor immersing himself in Roman Catholic religious practice, he immediately noticed the prevalence of crucifixes along his footpath. He shared with me his experience several months after he returned, describing the start of his pilgrimage in Roncesvalles, Spain, where he spent some time alone in a 13th-century chapel gazing upon a medieval crucifix, where he pondered how he was going to spend his 500-mile pilgrimage walk.

Ben found his pilgrimage journey-by-foot to be spiritually transformative.

I remember he shared with some of his fellow Pastors how every crucifix looked similar, yet different. For him, this emphasized how the death of Jesus has been all too quickly domesticated, meaning that the crucifixion has gone from being a compelling story into some a sterile, stagnant, religious formula. That would be to sanitize the crucifixion – the cross made palatable for 'polite society' and devoid of all scandal or intrigue.

Over the course of his presentation, Ben shared several insights that came to him as he contemplated all the different crucifixes he had seen over the course of his 500-mile journey on foot.

First, he was impressed by how scandalous the cross is. The crucifixion is ultimately the damning indictment of the world as it has been arranged by sinful man. When the Son of God entered our world, our systems of violent empire and sacrificial religion nailed Him to a tree to murder Him. This is the moment when the principalities and powers that run the world were put to shame and their claims of being 'wise' and 'just' were shown to be nothing but an empty sham, as the Apostle Paul writes (1 st Cor. 1:18).

Second, Ben was impressed by the cross as an image of unspeakable pain. After many days of walking, he himself began to suffer with blisters on his feet, as many pilgrims do. For him, his walking along in pain was a reminder that even as he walked with painful blisters, he tried to remember in prayer those who live with chronic pain — be it physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual pain. His second insight reminds us of the Scripture verse: By His wounds we are healed (1 Peter 2:24). Yet, Ben's insight further reveals yet another mystery about the Christian faith: when we bring our wounds to the wounded Jesus, that does not increase our woundedness, but rather that bringing of our wounds to the wounded One tends to bring us towards healing and wholeness.

Third, Ben became aware of the great beauty that is to be found in all the crucifixes as objective works of medieval and renaissance art. This may seem undignified since, on a purely objective level, there is nothing beautiful about the sight of man being tortured to death. Yet beauty is present in the crucifixion of Jesus, and artists throughout history have rendered us, and subsequent generations, a great service by calling our attention to it. We can say this because, shining through the grotesque ugliness of human torture and murder is the magnificent beauty of God's love and outrageous, generous forgiveness. Surely this is evident in Jesus' utterance from upon the cross, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do (Luke 23:34). I remember my friend Ben came away from his long pilgrimage with his newfound conclusion that "Jesus' love is the beauty that saves the world."

Brothers and sisters, we don't need to travel to far-off places like Spain to have our own transformative pilgrimages this Easter season. All we really need to do is journey to our pews, to hear God's Word read, sung, and preached, and to feast on the visible proclamation of God's grace in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Perhaps you will mark your calendars and join us for this year's special Ascension Day service at 7 o'clock on Thursday, May 9th, at Forks-Zion. I hope you'll still join us for our regular worship services this Easter season that we all may be transformed, like my friend Ben, into having a deeper appreciation for the beauty of grace that is to be found in our Lord Jesus' sacrifice unto death for us and for our salvation.


Therefore, let us take up the challenge to pilgrimage! Let us journey boldly forth this Eastertide knowing that the God of resurrection and new life meets us wherever we are to be found along the path, where we are, as we are, blisters, pains, and all, and He even has the nerve to greet us as His friends! If our Lord Jesus greets us as His friends and He invites us to journey with Him into the great unknown future, how can we not but help be all the more transformed by His beauty which saves the world?

Happy Easter and let's celebrate our Lord's resurrection by keeping the home fires burning!

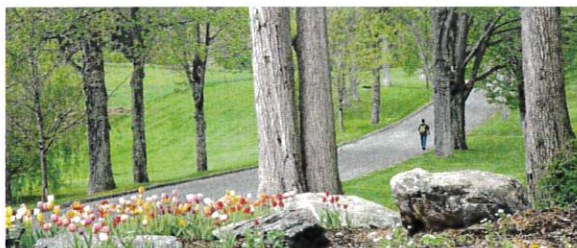
With every blessing and good wish for you and yours!
The Rev'd Dr Scott Dennis, PhD (aka Pastor Dennis)

Scatter seeds
of kindness
wherever you go

MAY 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5 11:00 am Worship	6	7 5:00 pm Pantry Team	8	9 7:00pm Ascension Service with Pie Social following the service.	10 5:30 – 7:30 Feed My Sheep Pantry Open	11 The Clothesline 9:00-noon Bethesda Lutheran Church in Lower Burrell
12 <i>Mother's Day</i> 11:00 am Worship	13	14	15 6:30 PM Council Meeting	16	17	18 Clothing Closet 9:00-1:00 1 st Lutheran in Leechburg
19 11:00 am Worship	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 11:00 am Worship	27 	28	29	30	31	June 1

Mark your calendars and join us for this year's Special Ascension Day Service at 7 o'clock on Thursday, May 9th, at Forks-Zion. Pie Social follows.



SYNOD ASSEMBLY

Two volunteers are needed to be Fork-Zions' lay representatives at this year's upcoming Synod Assembly. **Synod Assembly 2024** will be held from **June 14 - June 15** at **PennWest California University**, California, PA.

Please speak with Pastor Dennis, if interested in attending.

Please keep the following people in your prayers:

Marilyn Smail, Grace Van Dyke, Alison Loudon, Bob Lawrence, Brenda Ribet, Bob Bish, Dale Altman, Betty Black, Mary Walker, Anna Shaffer, Kim Snyder, Lou Fondrk, Louise Dyess, Becky Panzak, Kali, Deb Fabry, Peggy Phillips, Dina O'Neil, Sherry Gray, Luke, Nancy Marsh, Tracy Daugherty Albert, Patricia Bellingham (President of Northwest WELCA)

Global Prayer Concern: The people of Ukraine.
The people of Israel and Palestine. Peace for Gaza.

HOMEBOUND

Dale Altman

108 Jack Rd., Vandergrift, Pa 15690

724-842-7252

Betty Black

239 Johnetta Rd., Vandergrift, PA 15690

724-845-8057

Fran Coffman – Concordia

134 Marwood Rd, Apt. 1801; Cabot, PA 16023

Marilyn Knepshield

154 Forks Church Rd., Leechburg, PA 15656

Marilyn Smail – staying with son, Brad

2277 Kerr Road, Ford City, PA 16226

724-594-5228

Grace B. Van Dyke - Concordia

134 Marwood Road, Lund - Room 2155

Cabot, PA 16023 **724-524-1505**

Mary Walker – Concordia

134 Marwood Rd., Room 2131; Cabot, PA 16023

724-448-9683

Peggy Phillips – Oertel Personal Care Home

615 N. Pike Rd.; Cabot, PA 16023

Cole Rearick has left for basic training at Fort Jackson, SC. If you would like to send him a card of encouragement, his address is:

SPC Rearick, Cole, R.
C CO 2-13th INF REGT
4380 Centry Division Avenue
Fort Jackson, SC 29207



Our heartfelt sympathies go out to the families and friends of **Jana Lee Riggle and Marie Catlos**, two longtime members of our Forks-Zion Lutheran Church family.

Jana, wife of Ken Riggle, passed away on Saturday, April 6, 2024.

Marie, wife of the late Milan Catlos, passed away on Tues, April 9, 2024.

Donald Erb, husband of the late Michelle Altman Erb, passed away on April 12, 2024.

Please keep their families in your prayers during this difficult time.

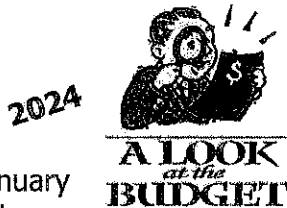
MAY WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Assisting Minister</u>	<u>GREETER/USHER</u>
May 5	Sandy Kotvas	Dee Bish
May 12	Patty Newton	
May 19	Tom Walker	<u>ALTAR CARE</u>
May 26	Tara Malucci	Tara Malucci & Cindy Walker

MAY SPONSORSHIPS

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Flowers</u>	<u>Bulletins</u>	<u>Candles</u>
May 5	Janean Stringer	Patty Newton	Tom Walker
May 12	Cindy Brient	Vic Rossi	
May 19	Marilyn Smail	Carl Minnich	
May 26	Glenda Paul	Patty Newton	

Note: If paying by check for flowers (\$37.00/week), bulletins (\$15.00/week), or candles (\$20.00/month), please make checks payable to "Forks Church" and place in the offering plate, give to Sandy Hess, place in the pocket on Sandy's office door or mail to the church at, FZLC, 253 Forks Church Rd., Leechburg 15656



	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expense</u>	<u>Difference</u>
January	\$11,127.25	\$15,848.10	\$14,713.44	\$1,134.66
February	\$11,127.25	\$13,366.00	\$13,110.20	\$255.80
March***	\$11,127.25	\$18,821.68	\$15,405.88	\$3,415.80
April 1 - 26	\$11,127.25	\$9,872.70	\$11,380.35	-\$1,507.65
May	\$11,127.25	\$	\$	\$
June	\$11,127.25	\$	\$	\$
July	\$11,127.25	\$	\$	\$
August	\$11,127.25	\$	\$	\$
September	\$11,127.25	\$	\$	\$
October	\$11,127.25	\$	\$	\$
November	\$11,127.25	\$	\$	\$
December	\$11,127.25			
Total to Date		\$57,908.48	\$54,609.87	\$3,298.61
Annual Budget	\$133,527.00			

*****An example for your info:**

In March, the unrestricted usable income total was \$6,849.00. The balance of income was restricted for other uses. For example \$11,081.68 of the income was from Bethesda and Forks' Endowment to be used ONLY for Pastor's salary, benefits, and other required pastoral expenses. Expenses paid from unrestricted funds totaled \$7,656.12. This amount includes utilities, staff salaries & wage taxes, church supplies, social event expenses, etc.

The actual balance in General Funds available to pay utilities, staff salaries and other common/budgeted expenses as of April 26 is \$3,333.26. On Sunday, April 28, staff salaries and other bills totaling \$2,425.88 will be paid and offering will be received. End of April actual numbers will be provided in the next newsletter.

As always, if you would like more information or have questions, please contact me. I will be glad to speak with you.

Karen Disciscio



MAY BIRTHDAYS

1	Sean Hess
8	Miranda Reesman
9	Amelia Eckman
12	Mary Walker; Lacey Eckman
22	Glenna Stitt
28	Paul Heilman
30	Grace Van Dyke

MAY ANNIVERSARIES

4	Denny and Susie Strapac
19	Sam and Erin Saxion
21	Paul and Paula Heilman
28	Jerry and Carole Hepler



LUTHERLYN

LOOSE OFFERINGS during the month of **MAY** will go toward camperships for our young folk at Lutherlyn.

Registration information on all upcoming summer camp opportunities may be found by checking out their website @ www.lutherlyn.com or call Lutherlyn directly @ 724-865-2161.

If you wish to donate towards Lutherlyn camperships for our young folks, you may do so by sending a check marked "camperships" to the church, 253 Forks Church Road, Leechburg.

LUTHERLYN will be HIRING SUMMER STAFF

Employment information and an on-line application are available at www.lutherlyn.com/summeremployment or by contacting Deb at 724-865-2161.



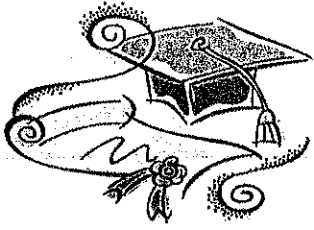
Feed My Sheep Pantry has received an \$8,000 grant from the **Ethel L Verney Fund** of the Synod Mission Endowment fund, established by synod council for relief and support of people living in poverty.

PIES from the Pie Shoppe fundraiser will be delivered on **Saturday, May 11**.
Pick-up at Forks Church, at noon.

Next Pantry Open Date

Friday, May 10
5:30 – 7:30 pm

CALLING FOR ALL 2024 GRADUATES



If you know of a student who will be graduating from high school, college, etc., please submit their information to the church secretary by **Sunday, May 12th**, so that their accomplishment(s) may be acknowledged in the June newsletter.

Student's Name: _____

Graduating from: _____

Honors received: _____

Other activities/interests: _____

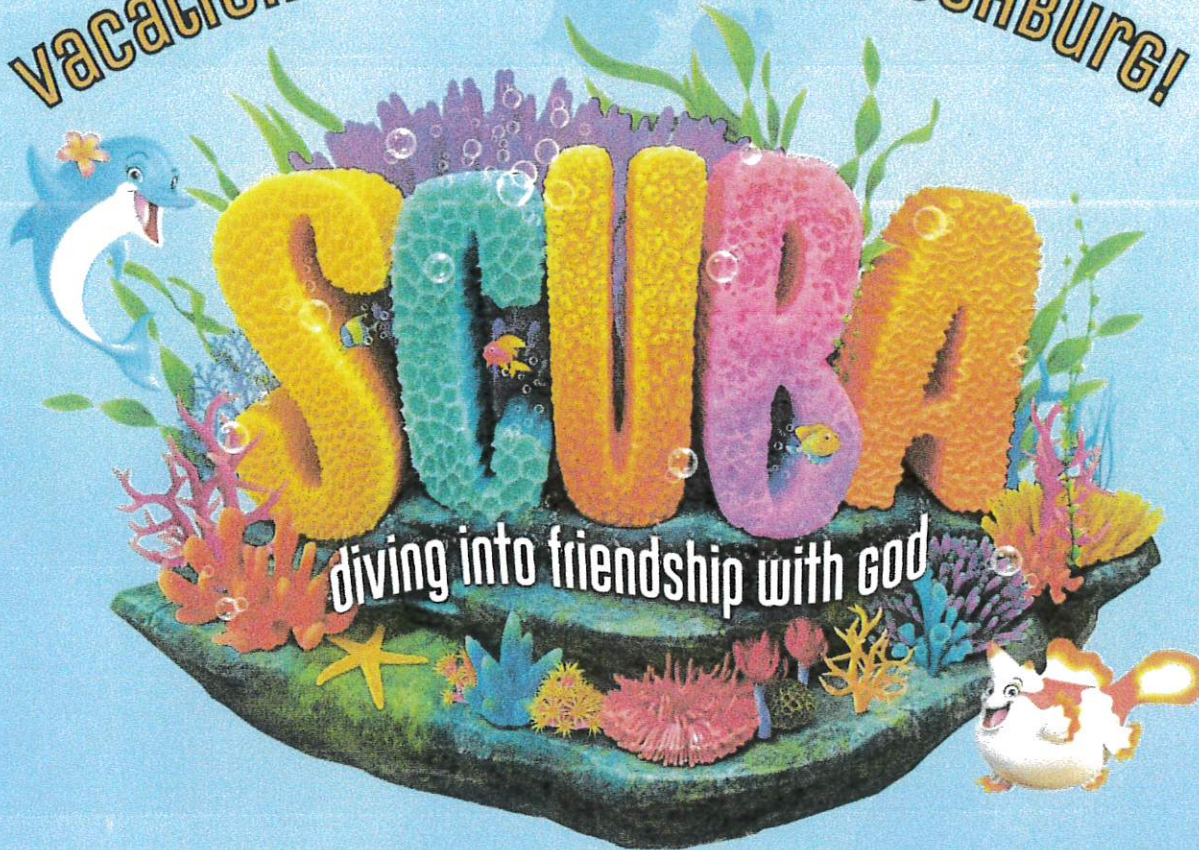
Plans for the future (further schooling, employment, military, etc):

Other information you would like to share:

Parent(s):

Grandparent(s):

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL IN LEECHBURG!



diving into friendship with god

MONDAY, JUNE 17 - FRIDAY, JUNE 21

8:30am UNTIL 11:30am

@ FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

251 MAIN ST. LEECHBURG

AGE 3 (Potty-trained) - 5th Grade

TO REGISTER, CONTACT OUR SPONSORING CONGREGATIONS:

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH-724-845-8761

HEBRON EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH-724-842-0801

FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH-724-845-7518

CROSS ROADS COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH-724-845-1901

REGISTER ONLINE: myvbs.org/leechburg

SCAN HERE!



Forks Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church
253 Forks Church Road
Leechburg, PA 15656

MAY 2024
FORKS CHIRPS

