

# **First Evangelical Lutheran Church**

**250 W. Decatur St.**

**Decatur, Illinois**

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*We have a livestream option on our website!*

**<https://felcdecatur.org/live>**



**November 26, 2023, at 9:30 am**

**HOLY COMMUNION**

***Come Experience God's Unlimited Grace, in a Most Welcoming Place***

# WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## PRELUDE

### GATHERING

#### **\*CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
in whose image we are made,  
who claims us and calls us beloved.

**Amen.**

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Holy One,  
**we confess that we are not awake for you.**  
**We are not faithful in using your gifts.**  
**We forget the least of our siblings.**  
**We do not see your beautiful image in one another.**  
**We are infected by sin**  
**that divides your beloved community.**  
**Open our hearts to your coming,**  
**open our eyes to see you in our neighbor,**  
**open our hands to serve your creation.**  
**Amen.**

Beloved, we are God's children,  
and Jesus, our Beloved, opens the door to us.  
Through † Jesus you are forgiven,  
by Jesus you are welcome,  
in Jesus you are called to rejoice!  
Let us live in the promises prepared for us  
from the foundation of the world.  
**Amen.**

#### **\*GATHERING SONG**

*"Christ Is Alive! Let Christians Sing"*

**ELW #389**

#### **GREETING**

**ELW p. 138**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be  
with you all. **And also, with you.**

#### **\*KYRIE**

**ELW p. 138**

#### **\*HYMN OF PRAISE**

*"This is the Feast"*

**ELW p. 140-141**

## **\*PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray,

**O God of power and might, your Son shows us the way of service, and in him we inherit the riches of your grace. Give us the wisdom to know what is right and the strength to serve the world you have made, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

## **WORD**

### **FIRST READING:**

**EZEKIEL 34:11-16, 20-24**

*Because Israel's kings proved to be bad shepherds, Ezekiel declares that the LORD will assume the role of shepherd in Israel. The LORD will also set over them a shepherd-messiah, "my servant David," who will feed and care for the people.*

<sup>11</sup>Thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. <sup>12</sup>As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. <sup>13</sup>I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. <sup>14</sup>I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. <sup>15</sup>I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord GOD. <sup>16</sup>I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice.

<sup>20</sup>Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. <sup>21</sup>Because you pushed with flank and shoulder, and butted at all the weak animals with your horns until you scattered them far and wide, <sup>22</sup>I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged; and I will judge between sheep and sheep.

<sup>23</sup>I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. <sup>24</sup>And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **PSALM**

**PSALM 95:1-7a**

<sup>1</sup>Come, let us sing <sup>1</sup>to the LORD;

let us shout for joy to the rock of <sup>1</sup>our salvation.

<sup>2</sup>**Let us come before God's presence <sup>1</sup>with thanksgiving  
and raise a loud shout to the <sup>1</sup>LORD with psalms.**

<sup>3</sup>For you, LORD, <sup>1</sup>are a great God,  
and a great ruler a- <sup>1</sup>bove all gods.

<sup>4</sup>**In your hand are the caverns <sup>1</sup>of the earth;  
the heights of the hills are <sup>1</sup>also yours.**

<sup>5</sup>The sea is yours, <sup>1</sup>for you made it,  
and your hands have molded <sup>1</sup>the dry land.

<sup>6</sup>**Come, let us worship <sup>1</sup>and bow down,  
let us kneel before the <sup>1</sup>LORD our maker.**

<sup>7a</sup>For the LORD <sup>1</sup>is our God,  
and we are the people of God's pasture and the sheep <sup>1</sup>of God's hand.

**SECOND READING:**

**EPHESIANS 1:15-23**

*In this passage, God is praised for revealing ultimate divine power in raising Jesus from the dead. The resurrected, exalted Christ is Lord of both the church and the entire universe, now and in the age to come.*

<sup>15</sup>I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason <sup>16</sup>I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. <sup>17</sup>I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, <sup>18</sup>so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, <sup>19</sup>and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. <sup>20</sup>God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup>far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. <sup>22</sup>And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, <sup>23</sup>which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**\*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (sung)**

**ELW p. 142**

The holy gospel according to Matthew, the 25<sup>th</sup> chapter

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

**\*GOSPEL READING:**

**MATTHEW 25:31-46**

*Jesus compares himself to a king who moves among his subjects to see how he is treated: what is done for the least of those who belong to his family is truly done for him.*

[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>31</sup>“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. <sup>32</sup>All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, <sup>33</sup>and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. <sup>34</sup>Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; <sup>35</sup>for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, <sup>36</sup>I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ <sup>37</sup>Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? <sup>38</sup>And when was it that we saw

you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? <sup>39</sup>And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' <sup>40</sup>And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family you did it to me.' <sup>41</sup>Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; <sup>42</sup>for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, <sup>43</sup>I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' <sup>44</sup>Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?' <sup>45</sup>Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' <sup>46</sup>And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **SERMON**

**\*HYMN OF THE DAY**

*"O Christ, What Can It Mean for Us"*

**ELW #431**

**\*NICENE CREED**

**ELW p. 104**

**We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary  
and became truly human.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

**\*PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

P: Let us turn our hearts to God, our breath and life, as we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

*A brief silence.*

A: Holy God, from Christ we receive our call to feed, clothe, and welcome. Direct your church to respond to this call with faithfulness and generous love. We pray for the work of ELCA World Hunger and partnerships with global feeding ministries.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A: In Christ, the rock of our salvation, we are brought into union with all of creation. With mountains, seas, dry lands, and animals of the field, we seek your guidance and protection.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A: In Christ we know merciful judgment. Guide rulers of every nation in ways of humble leadership and wise decision-making. Allow aid to come to all who are underserved and care to any who are neglected.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A: In Christ we feel the depth of your love and care toward us. Nourish all who hunger, connect any who are isolated, and surround all who experience rejection or abuse. We pray for those who suffer.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A: In Christ we are made the people of his pasture. Inspire the outreach and social ministries of this congregation. We pray for all people who serve and attend to the needs of others.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A: Holy God, in Christ we are welcomed home. We praise you for the faithful witness of those who have served you and extended your welcome and love to us. Unite us with them as one body of Christ.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

P: We offer our spoken prayers and those held in our hearts trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**\* PEACE**

**MEAL**

**OFFERING**

**OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray,

**God of all goodness, generations have turned to you, gathered around your table, and shared your abundant blessings. Number us among them that, as we gather these gifts from your abundance and give thanks for your rich blessings, we may feast upon your very self and care for all that you have made, through Jesus Christ, our Sovereign and Servant. Amen.**

**\*THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

**ELW p. 144**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
that we should at all times and in all places  
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,  
through our Savior Jesus Christ;  
who on this day overcame death and the grave,  
and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.  
And so, with all the choirs of angels,  
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,  
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**HOLY, HOLY**

**ELW p. 144**

**WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

**LORD'S PRAYER**

**ELW p. 145 (right side)**

**INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

There is a place for you at the banquet.  
Come and feast at Jesus' table.

*At each worship service FELC celebrates communion around the altar rail using non-alcoholic sacramental wine so that all present may receive God's Grace in this sacrament. If anyone is unable to come to the altar, the Pastor and assistants will bring the sacrament to you. (If*

*possible, please alert the Pastor or Assistant prior to Worship service if you want communion at your seat). You are also welcome to pick up a disposable chalice containing wine or juice at the back of the church. If you are taking communion at the rail and feel less steady on your feet, feel free to come to the front of the communion rail rather than walking around toward the back.*

## **COMMUNION**

*“Lamb of God”*

**ELW p. 146**

### **\*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray,

**Lord Jesus, in this simple meal you have set a banquet.**

**Sustain us on the journey, strengthen us to care for the least of your beloved children, and give us glad and generous hearts as we meet you on the way.**

**Amen.**

## **SENDING**

### **\*BLESSING**

May the God of all creation, in whose image we are made,  
who claims us and calls us beloved,  
who strengthens us for service,  
give you reason to rejoice and be glad!

The blessing of God, Sovereign, ✠ Savior, and Spirit,  
be with you today and always.

**Amen.**

### **\*SENDING SONG**

*“Rejoice, for Christ Is King”*

**ELW #430**

### **\*DISMISSAL**

Beloved of God, go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **\*POSTLUDE**

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## Participants

Presiding and Preaching	Pastor Janet Lepp
Assisting Minister	Karen Wenger
Coordinator of Music and Technology/Organist/Handbells	Rick Strine
Choir Director	Sarah Boline
Technical Director	Jeremy Hahn
Audio/Visual	Audio/Visual Team
Bell Ringer	John Malachowski
Greeters	Kris Sites & Larry Osborne
Check-In	Carol Broeking & Pat Dalen
Communion Aide	Jane Cade
Money Counters	Bob & Judy Carney, Mike Corley
Acolyte	Siena Romine

## Prayer Requests

Matt Andrews and Family, Tyson Binion, Mary Ellen & Tom Burns,  
Debra Jones, Jan Lawson, Doris Oliver, Carolyn Renton, family of Ryan Snyder,  
family of Glen Sweitzer, Patty & Ken Tague, Anna Young

*If you'd like to add someone to the Prayer Request list, please contact Kay at the office.  
Prayer requests remain on the list for 3 weeks and can be extended longer at your request.*

## **Welcome to all of you here and to those participating on-line**

### *Announcements*

1. Welcome Pastor Janet! Thank you for preaching & presiding today.
2. Our deepest sympathy to Glen Sweitzer's family. Visitation & funeral is Monday, November 27<sup>th</sup> at Graceland Fairlawn funeral home. Please keep his family in your prayers.
3. Our youth will be rehearsing the Christmas Program after worship service today.
4. Join Pastor Rita for Advent Study this Wednesday, November 29<sup>th</sup>, from 12:15-1:15pm. December meeting dates are December 6, 13 & 20<sup>th</sup>. Contact the office or Pastor Rita if you are interested in an evening meeting via zoom.
5. The AMELCA Team served 59 clients on Wednesday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>. Thanks to everyone that donated food items for the Thanksgiving Food Baskets as well as to those of you that supported the bake sale and Son Rise Café. Donations from Sunday, the 19<sup>th</sup> totaled \$852. Judy & Bob Carney will sponsor Son Rise on December 10<sup>th</sup> with another bake sale as well as cookie jar mixes. All proceeds will be given to AMELCA.
6. Please see the Suggestion/Question Box on the Greeters Table in the Narthex. We need your Suggestions for 2024 Goals and Welcome your questions about shared ministry. Forms are located on the side pocket of the box. Including your name is optional, however, it's helpful for follow-up.
7. Baby Jesus donations will be collected until December 18<sup>th</sup>.
8. Toys for Tots donation boxes will be in the Narthex from November through early December.
9. Poinsettia order forms are in the Narthex. Please submit your form by Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup> and all Poinsettia deliveries should be on Friday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> from 9am-3pm. Contact Kay in the office with any questions.
10. Homebound cookie delivery and caroling with our Homebound will be December 10<sup>th</sup>. Carolers will meet at the church at 1:00pm to pickup cookies and route instructions. All singers and non-singers are welcome to join in and brighten the season for our Homebound.
11. Sunday December 24<sup>th</sup> (Christmas Eve) Worship Service is 4:30pm. There will not be a 9:30am morning service.

**Let us Prepare our Hearts and Minds for Worship**

## UPCOMING DATES TO MARK ON YOUR CALENDAR

MEET, EAT & GREET  
(MEG)

### Upcoming MEG Luncheons Thursday's at Noon

- December 14
- January 11
- February 8
- March 14
- April 11



ADVENT "BARN  
PAINT" RETREAT

### Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup> 9:00am-12:00pm FELC Fellowship Hall

Participants will paint on a 10"x10" or 12"x12" board with the design pre-drawn. There is no cost for this gathering. Supplies are covered by Thrivent Choice Dollars. Please bring a hair dryer that has a cool setting (for a faster drying time of paint).



This Christmas season is the 76<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Marine Corps Reserve's "Toys for Tots" program. Here in Macon County this outreach is now coordinated with Dove and WAND TV's "Day of Giving", and volunteers are always welcome to help sort and distribute the toys mid-December. While "Toys for Tots" donation boxes will be available throughout Decatur, this year First Lutheran will have a box at our lower entrance and a box in our narthex during November and early December. See Bob Tyler for additional information. *Semper fidelis* – Bob Tyler



Baby Jesus donations of diapers, onesies, receiving blankets, etc. can be placed in the box in the Narthex. Donations will be collected from now through December 18th. Please see Jane Cade with questions.



***Please join us for Advent Study*** Wednesdays 12:15-1:15 pm on:  
November 29, December 6, 13 & 20.

Contact Kay in the office or Pastor Rita if you are interested in an evening meeting via zoom.



Poinsettia order forms are in the Narthex. Please submit your completed form by Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup>. Please arrange for your Poinsettia to be delivered on Friday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> from 9am-3pm.



**ATTENTION COOKIE BAKERS & CAROLERS.** Sunday December 10<sup>th</sup> is the date for cookie delivery and caroling to our Homebound. Cookies will be packaged on that Sunday at 9:30am. Bring your homemade cookies marked “FOR CAROLING” to the kitchen on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday or Friday from 9:00am-4:00pm during the week of December 3<sup>rd</sup> or by 9:30am on Sunday December 10<sup>th</sup>.



Carolers will meet at church at 1:00pm to pickup cookies and route instructions. Following our caroling, we will have an opportunity for socializing. All singers and non-singers are welcome to join in and brighten the season for our Homebound.



THE GRIEF GROUP will meet on Mondays from 11:00am-12:30pm in the lounge on the following dates:

- Dec 4 & 18
- Jan 8, 15, 29
- Feb 12, 26
- Mar 11, 25
- April 8, 22