

First Evangelical Lutheran Church

250 W. Decatur St.

Decatur, Illinois

(217) 423-7783

Website: www.felcdecatur.org

Email: felc_decatur@outlook.com

We have a livestream option on our website!

<https://felcdecatur.org/live>



December 17, 2023, at 9:30 am

HOLY COMMUNION

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

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Philippians 4:4

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

GATHERING

***GATHERING SONG**

“Unexpected and Mysterious”

ELW #258

INVOCATION & LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

(Two purple candles and one pink candle are lit on the Advent wreath.)

P: Today we light the third Advent candle, the candle of joy. When Mary, the mother of our Lord, visited her kinswoman Elizabeth, Elizabeth’s unborn son John leaped for joy at the sound of Mary’s greeting. Elizabeth was filled with joy, knowing that the promised Messiah would soon be born. We, too, rejoice as we prepare to celebrate our Savior’s birth.

C: We will rejoice in the Lord, now and forever!

P: The prophet Isaiah foretold a highway, the Way of Holiness, a place where the redeemed would walk. Following that holy Way, the redeemed would live in the presence of God and know everlasting joy. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

C: We will rejoice in the Lord, now and forever!

P: In the midst of our joy, we are called to repent and acknowledge our need for a Savior. Let us confess our sins to God and ask his forgiveness.

C: Almighty God, while we rejoice in the birth of our Savior, we do not always find joy in following him. We seek to satisfy ourselves with earthly joy, joy that does not last. We turn away from the guidance of your Word and follow our own selfish desires. We do not walk in love as Jesus walked and instead put our needs ahead of the needs of others. Have mercy on us and forgive our sins for Jesus’ sake. Lead us to find joy in following Jesus our Lord.

P: God had mercy on us and sent his Son to be our Savior. I announce to you that your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

C: Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

HYMN OF RESPONSE: *“Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound”*

**Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.**

**Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess, within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.**

**The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
The sun forbear to shine;
But God, who called me here below,
Will be forever mine.**

**When we’ve been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We’ve no less days to sing God’s praise
Than when we’d first begun.**

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray,

C: Almighty God, your servant Elizabeth and her unborn son, the prophet John, rejoiced at the greeting of Mary, the mother of our Lord. We give you praise and thanks for the many earthly joys of this Advent season, but above all, we praise you for the gift of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. By your grace, through faith in Jesus, we share the joy of Elizabeth and John. We know joy in our Lord right now and will rejoice in his presence for all eternity. Lead us to share this joy with others through acts of love and service and through our witness to our Savior. We pray that by the power of your Spirit, they, too, will come to rejoice in Jesus. Hear our prayer and accept our praise in Jesus’ name. Amen.

WORD

FIRST READING:

ISAIAH 35:1-10

¹The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus ²it shall blossom abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and singing.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the LORD,
the majesty of our God.

³Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴Say to those who are of a fearful heart,

"Be strong, do not fear!

Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.

He will come and save you."

⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

⁶then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;

⁷the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

⁸A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God's people;
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

⁹No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.

¹⁰And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CHOIR ANTHEM

"Born to Set Thy People Free"

by Lloyd Larson

SECOND READING:

PHILIPPIANS 4:4-7

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

⁵Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.

⁶Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving
let your requests be made known to God.

⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (sung)**

Gospel Acclamation



The holy gospel according to Luke, the 1st chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

***GOSPEL READING:**

LUKE 1:39-45

³⁹In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country,

⁴⁰where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit

⁴²and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.

⁴³And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me?

⁴⁴For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy.

⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

***HYMN OF THE DAY**

"Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus"

ELW #254

APOSTLES CREED

ELW p. 105

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

P: Lord Jesus, Elizabeth rejoiced to greet Mary, and the unborn child John leaped for joy. During this busy season, fill us with joy as we prepare to celebrate your birth and look forward to your return on the Last Day.

Jesus, our King and Savior,
C: In you, we have eternal joy!

A: Lord Jesus, the prophet Isaiah foretold your birth. When you came to save your people, everlasting joy would crown their heads. Through your death and resurrection, you have won forgiveness for us. We find joy in your gifts, in your Word and sacraments, and one day we will rejoice in your glorious presence.

Jesus, our King and Savior,
C: In you, we have eternal joy!

P: Lord Jesus, during your earthly ministry, you reached out to others with compassion and healing. There are many people who do not know joy during this Christmas season. They suffer from illness, grief or difficult times with work or family. Help them to find comfort, encouragement and joy in the promises of your Word.

Jesus, our King and Savior,
C: In you, we have eternal joy!

A: Lord Jesus, during this Christmas season, we search for just the right gifts to give to family members and friends. Lead us to share our blessings with those who are in need, not only during this season of joy, but all throughout the year.

Jesus, our King and Savior,
C: In you, we have eternal joy!

P: Lord Jesus, we are preparing with repentant joy to celebrate your first Advent, your birth in Bethlehem. We also look forward to your Second Advent, your return on the Last Day. Angels and shepherds rejoiced at your birth and we will, at your return, rejoice in your presence forever. You have promised that you are coming soon, and we reply, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

Jesus, our King and Savior,
C: In you, we have eternal joy! Amen.

*** PEACE**

MEAL

OFFERING

OFFERING PRAYER

P: Let us pray,

**C: God our provider, by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth.
Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty.
Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people,
through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

LORD'S PRAYER

ELW p. 145 (right side)

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

In this meal, righteousness and peace meet together. Come, take your place at the 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

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

P: Let us pray.

**C: Generous God, in bread and cup you have revealed your glory
for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim
your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior.
Amen.**

SENDING

***BLESSING**

P: And a highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Way of Holiness ...
the redeemed shall walk there.
And the ransomed of the Lord shall return
and come to Zion with singing;

**C: Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.**

P: May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

C: Amen.

***SENDING SONG**

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

ELW #257

***DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Keep awake.

Thanks be to God.

***POSTLUDE**

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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.*

Participants

Presiding	Pastor Rita Augsburger
Preaching	Bishop Greg Busboom
Assisting Minister	Larry Osborne
Coordinator of Music and Technology/Organist/Handbells	Rick Strine
Choir Director	Sarah Boline
Technical Director	Jeremy Hahn
Audio/Visual	Audio/Visual Team
Bell Ringer	Dick Donahue
Greeters	Dick & Donna Donahue
Check-In	Marsha Corley
Communion Aide	Bill Fitzgerald
Money Counters	The Wengers & The Broekings
Acolyte	Aurora Romine
Flowers	From the Church in Honor of Bishop Greg Busboom
Son-Rise Café	FELC Council
We Welcome The Decatur Area Horn Club	Steve Craven
	Brian Lauthen
	Dick Dickinson
	George Osborn
	Dathan Lidy
	Steve Schepper

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

Announcements

1. Welcome Bishop Greg Busboom and thank you for preaching this morning!
2. Welcome to The Decatur Horn Club. Thank you for playing today!
3. Please stay after Worship for Son-Rise Café to further meet & greet Bishop Greg. After Son-Rise Café, the Leadership Team will meet with the Bishop.
4. **“THANK YOU”** to God for the gifts Molly, Rick and Kris shared in regard to coordinating and leading the Youth in their Faith Formation message given last Sunday during worship. May the Holy Spirit enable us to *LISTEN FOR GOD, MAKE ROOM, TELL THE STORY, BE BOLD, and GUIDE OTHERS* to God’s promise of amazing Grace and Peace found in Jesus. Amen.
5. **“THANK YOU”** to everyone that participated in the AMELCA fundraisers with the generous food and cash donations. Fundraiser cash donations over the past 2 months are over \$2940.
6. **“THANK YOU”** to all who made the Caroling and Cookie delivery a huge success. The great response from the bakers filled our containers. There were three helpers who stepped in on Sunday morning to pack the containers for delivery. Fourteen singers took time out of their busy schedules to sing and deliver the cookies. We want everyone who participated in this event to know, you truly brightened the day of our special members.
7. The AMELCA Team served 64 clients on Wednesday, December 13th.
8. The Grief Group meets on Monday the 18th from 11:00am-12:30pm in the Lounge.
9. The final Advent Study is on Wednesday from 12:15-1:15pm.
10. Baby Jesus donations will be collected until tomorrow, December 18th.
11. Please bring or arrange for your Poinsettia to be delivered to church on Friday, December 22nd from 9am-3pm.
12. Sunday December 24th (Christmas Eve) Worship Service is 4:30pm. There will not be a 9:30am morning service.
13. 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.
14. The church office will be closed on Monday, December 25th and Tuesday, December 26th. The office will also be closed on Monday, January 1st and Tuesday, January 2nd. The office is closed on both Mondays due to the holidays and is always closed on Tuesdays. Contact Kay in the office with any questions.

Let us Prepare our Hearts and Minds for Worship

UPCOMING DATES TO MARK ON YOUR CALENDAR

(MEG)
MEET, EAT & GREET

Upcoming MEG Luncheons Second Thursdays at Noon

*Jan. 11	*May 9	*Sept. 12
*Feb. 8	*June 6	*Oct. 10
*Mar. 14	*July 11	*Nov. 14
*Apr. 11	*Aug. 8	*Dec. 12



Please join us for Advent Study in the Lounge
Wednesdays 12:15pm - 1:15pm on December 20



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

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



ART WORSHIP CLASSES will begin again in
January. Classes will be in the fellowship hall
from 1:00pm-2:30pm the 3rd Thursday each
month:

*January 18	*March 21	*May 16
*February 15	*April 18	

Please contact Kay in the office or Pastor Rita
to sign up.



ALTAR GUILD

There will be an **Altar Guild** meeting on
February 10th from 11:30am-1:00pm at
church. More details to follow.

A course offering of the Faith Formation Committee
of the Central/Southern Illinois Synod – ELCA

Church History Survey

Saturdays Online via ZOOM 9:00 AM to Noon

January 13 & 27

February 10 & 24

March 9 & 23

**There is no cost for this class thanks to a generous gift
from a congregation in our synod.**

Pr. Luanne Cantrell – Course Instructor

Course Description:

As with any history course, this course will be looking at events that have shaped the world in which we now live. Specifically, the events that have shaped the Church as we know it today. The course will take us on a journey through time where we will discover both the triumphs and mistakes which will provide us the opportunity to learn their impact on the Church itself.

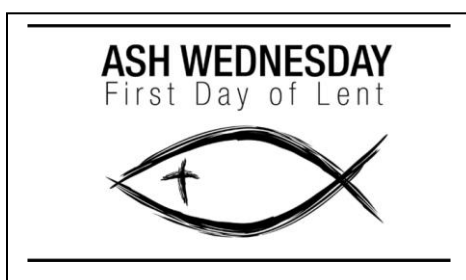
Below is the link to register for this class.

[Adult Faith Formation: Church History Survey - Central/Southern Illinois Synod \(csis-elca.org\)](https://csis-elca.org)

Please contact Pastor Rita if you are interested in attending this class by zoom in the Lounge at church. Even if you attend via zoom at church, you must register prior to January 13th which is the first class.



Please plan to attend the
Annual Congregation Meeting
on January 28, 2024.
The meeting will be held after
Worship Service.



Please mark February 14, 2024 on your
calendar to attend **Ash Wednesday**
Worship Services at 12:15pm and 6:00pm.