

First Evangelical Lutheran Church

250 W. Decatur St.

Decatur, Illinois

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Email: felc_decatur@outlook.com

We have a livestream option on our website!

<https://felcdecatur.org/live>



December 31, 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,
the Word made flesh, our life, and our salvation.

Amen.

Trusting the goodness and lovingkindness of God our Savior,
let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of life,
**you promise good news of great joy for all people,
and call us to be messengers of your peace.**

**We confess that too often we hoard our joy,
our resources, and our security.**

We nurture conflict and build barriers.

**We neglect the needs of our neighbors
and ignore the groaning of creation.**

Have mercy on us.

Where we are self-centered, open our hearts.

Where we are reluctant, give us courage.

Where we are cynical, restore our trust.

**Renew us with your grace
and give us again the hope of eternal life in you.**

Amen.

Hear the good news:

We are children of God and heirs of God's promises
through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

In † Jesus you are forgiven and redeemed.

Sing with joy, for all the ends of the earth
shall know the salvation of God.

Amen.

***GATHERING SONG**

"He Came Down"

ELW #253

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.**

***HYMN OF PRAISE**

“Gloria To The Lord, Our God”

JOHN YLVISAKER

- 1 Gloria! To the Lord, our God. Gloria! Hear the angels singing.
Gloria! Let your praise resound. Gloria! Hear the voices ringing.
Gloria! In the universe. Gloria! In the holy places
Gloria! Bringing peace on earth. Gloria! To the warring nations.

Refrain: Gloria! Gloria! Gloria! Hear the angels sing.
Gloria! Gloria! Gloria! To the newborn King.

- 2 Gloria! To the Pascal Lamb. Gloria! To the thirst and hunger.
Gloria! To the Great I AM. Gloria! To the awe and wonder.
Gloria! In the deep blue sea. Gloria! In the highest heaven.
Gloria! To the mystery. Gloria! To the bread unleavened.

Refrain: Gloria! Gloria! Gloria! Hear the angels sing.
Gloria! Gloria! Gloria! To the newborn King.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray,

Almighty God, you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and yet more wonderfully restored it. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of the one who came to share our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

WORD

FIRST READING:

ISAIAH 61:10--62:3

To the people who returned to Jerusalem after the exile, the prophet proclaims that God's salvation will fully come to pass. Jerusalem will become a shining light to the nations and righteousness and praise will spring up as surely as the earth puts forth vegetation.

¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

^{62:1}For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
until her vindication shines out like the dawn,
and her salvation like a burning torch.
²The nations shall see your vindication,
and all the kings your glory;
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the LORD will give.
³You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

PSALM 148

¹Hallelujah! Praise the LORD¹ from the heavens;
praise God¹ in the heights.
²**Praise the LORD,¹ all you angels;
sing praise, all you¹ hosts of heaven.**
³Praise the LORD,¹ sun and moon;
sing praise, all you¹ shining stars.
⁴**Praise the LORD, heav-¹ en of heavens,
and you waters a-¹ bove the heavens.**
⁵Let them praise the name¹ of the LORD,
who commanded, and they¹ were created,
⁶**who made them stand fast forev-¹ er and ever,
giving them a law that shall not¹ pass away.**
⁷Praise the LORD¹ from the earth,
you sea monsters¹ and all deeps;
⁸**fire and hail,¹ snow and fog,
tempestuous wind, do-¹ ing God's will;**
⁹mountains¹ and all hills,
fruit trees¹ and all cedars;
¹⁰**wild beasts¹ and all cattle,
creeping things and¹ flying birds;**
¹¹sovereigns of the earth¹ and all peoples,
princes and all rulers¹ of the world;
¹²**young¹ men and maidens,
old and¹ young together.**
¹³Let them praise the name¹ of the LORD,
whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over¹ earth and heaven.
¹⁴**The LORD has raised up strength for the people and praise for all¹ faithful servants,
the children of Israel, a people who are near the LORD.¹ Hallelujah!**

SECOND READING:**GALATIANS 4:4-7**

Paul seeks to show the Galatians that the purpose of Christ's birth was to liberate us from the law's condemnation so that we would be fully adopted into God's family as beloved children.

⁴When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. ⁶And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" ⁷So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (sung)*ELW p. 142**

The holy gospel according to Luke, the 2nd chapter

Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL READING:*LUKE 2:22-40**

Luke's narrative continues with stories that emphasize Jesus' connection to Judaism. His family is devout in its observance of the law, and Jesus himself is recognized as one who will bring glory to Israel.

²²When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, [Joseph and Mary] brought [Jesus] up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), ²⁴and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹"Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word;

³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles

and for glory to your people Israel."

³³And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too."

³⁶There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer

night and day. ³⁸At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON (Reference: Isaiah 61:1-2a [p. 724 bible], Luke 2:28-32, Luke 4:14-22 [p. 996 bible])

John the Baptist in Elizabeth's womb leaps for joy when encountering Jesus within Mary's womb. (Luke 1:41)

Song of Mary (Luke 1:46-55), Song of Zechariah (Luke 1:68-79)

Joseph - protector and engaged to Mary (Luke 2:5, 16), Simeon (Luke 2:28-32 and a blessing)

Anna – praised God and told the story to anyone who was there. (Luke 2:38)

When the Song of the Angels Is Stilled by Howard Thurman, serves as a beautiful call to covenant renewal.

*When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and the princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flocks,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among people,
To make music in the heart.*

***HYMN OF THE DAY**

“Cold December Flies Away”

ELW #299

APOSTLES CREED

ELW p. 105

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

P: Trusting in God's good news of great joy for all people, we offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world God loves.

A brief silence.

A: You inspire faith in our hearts and call us to rejoice with our whole selves at the salvation you bring. Make our churches places of belonging for all people in the fullness of their being. Raise up the gifts and the witness of people who are neurodivergent, living with disability, or bearing invisible illness.

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

A: Your praise is sung throughout creation in all times and seasons. As the new year turns, ground us in your changeless and sustaining love. Keep us attentive to the rhythms of the cosmos and inspire us to live in harmony with all the earth.

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

A: Give hope and stamina to leaders who work tirelessly for the sake of the most vulnerable. We pray especially for organizations working on behalf of children to provide basic needs, to protect from abuse and neglect, to address trauma, and to rescue from trafficking.

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

A: Sustain all people who, like Simeon and Anna, have been waiting for salvation and wholeness. We pray especially for anyone living with cancer or chronic illness, all people who are in physical rehabilitation or addiction recovery, and those experiencing complications from long COVID.

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

A: Let this community of faith be a joyful and welcome place for all ages and generations. Teach us to honor the wisdom of children, the inquisitiveness of youth, the thoughtfulness of adults, and the knowledge of elders.

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

A: We give thanks for all the beloved who lived with expectation and departed this life in peace. Sustain us in joy until we join them around your throne.

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

P: Abide with us, O God of mercy, and receive our prayers according to your abundant grace.
Amen.

*** PEACE**

MEAL

OFFERING

(We thank you for your time, talent, and money toward ministry at FELC and beyond. Please place your money donation in the offering basket at the back of church, or on-line, or by mail.)

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray,

God of abundance,

receive and bless these gifts we have offered.

Join our hearts with the song of the angels,

and gather us at your table of celebration.

Strengthen us to share with all the world

the abundance of your grace upon grace,

poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.

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.

In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh
You have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory,
that beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see.
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

Glory to God in the highest!
Come to the table of peace.

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,
**God our redeemer,
you have fed us at this table
with gifts of grace, truth, and life.
As you have gathered us in joy,
send us forth as messengers of your peace.
Make us shine with the good news of your glory,
born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

SENDING

***BLESSING**

God bless you and keep you,
✠ Jesus grant you grace and truth,
and the Spirit send peace upon your hearts,
now and forever.
Amen.

***SENDING SONG**

“Go Tell It on the Mountain”

ELW #290

***DISMISSAL**

Christ the Savior is born!
Go in peace. Proclaim this good news.
Thanks be to God.

***POSTLUDE**

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Participants

Presiding and Preaching

Assisting Minister

Coordinator of Music and Technology/Organist/Handbells

Choir Director

Technical Director

Audio/Visual

Bell Ringer

Greeters

Check-In

Communion Aide

Money Counters

Acolyte

Pastor Rita Augsburg

Bill Fitzgerrel

Rick Strine

Sarah Boline

Jeremy Hahn

Audio/Visual Team

Mike Reynolds

Mike & Karen Reynolds

Ruth Nihiser

Kris Sites

The Broekings & The Wengers

Emmy Murphy

Prayer Requests

Matt Andrews and Family, Tyson Binion, Whitley Blankenship,
friends & family of Tom Brennan, Mary Ellen & Tom Burns, Debra Jones,
Jan Lawson, Doris Oliver, family of Ryan Snyder, Hailey Stark, Rick Strine,
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. The AMELCA Team served 60 clients on Wednesday, December 27th.
2. Giving thanks to God for the birth of Pastor Rita's fourth grandchild Noah, who was born Wednesday evening Dec. 27. Pastor will have the opportunity to meet him the middle of January.
3. The church office will be closed on Monday, January 1st and Tuesday, January 2nd. The office is closed on Monday due to the holiday and is always closed on Tuesdays. Contact Kay in the office with any questions.
4. The next Grief Group meeting is Monday January 8th from 11:00am-12:30pm in the Lounge.
5. Church History Class is being offered at no charge. If interested in attending via zoom from church, please notify Pastor Rita. Classes are on Saturdays 9:00am-12:00pm. The first class date has changed from January 13th to January 20th. See more details on the back side of the bulletin.
6. Art Workshop will start up again on January 18th at 1:00pm-2:30pm in the fellowship hall. Please contact Kay or Pastor Rita to sign-up.
7. Annual Congregational Meeting will be January 28th following Worship Service.
8. And before you know it, Lent will be here. Ash Wednesday is February 14th. We will have Worship Services at 12:15pm and at 6:00pm.
9. 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.
10. Please pick up your Offering Envelopes located on the table in the Narthex. If your envelopes are not on the table, please notify the office or Chuck.
11. We need hosts for our Meet, Eat & Greet lunches. Our January 11th lunch is covered, but we need hosts for the remainder of the year. You can make any entrée you want, and participants will bring sides & desserts. The sign-up sheet is in the Narthex. Please consider hosting or co-hosting with a friend! Thank you!

Let us Prepare our Hearts and Minds for Worship

UPCOMING DATES TO MARK ON YOUR CALENDAR

MEET, EAT & GREET (MEG)

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



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

- 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.



A luncheon meeting for all Altar Guild members, and anyone interested in learning more about serving on FELC's Altar Guild, will be held on Saturday, February 10th at 11:30 in the Fellowship Hall. Because a light lunch will be served, attendees are asked to confirm their attendance by contacting Carol Tyler via text at 217-620-1356 or email at cityler5@msn.com. Those attending are also asked to bring their own beverage of choice. Please note, in case of inclement weather, Saturday, February 17th is the back-up date.

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 20 & 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.

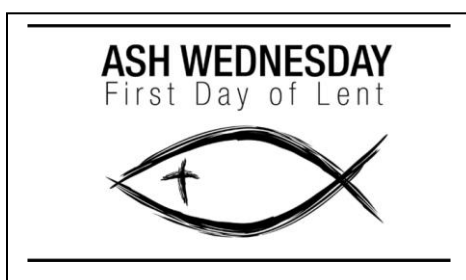
Below is the link to register for this class.

[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 20th 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.